

California Historical Quarterly

Spring 1972



A CALIFORNIA PARTY ON A PICNIC EXCURSION, 1850

NOTE: Beginning with this issue of the *Quarterly*, Volume 51, No. 1, the date of publication will be designated by season rather than month.

COVER: When California thrust itself upon the consciousness of the civilized world, the demand for scenes of life in the land of gold led to some curious excesses by way of the engraver's flights of fancy. We have seen cases where San Francisco Bay seemed lifted from a view of Rio de Janeiro or a California mission took on the aspect of a scene in some suburb of Madrid. A fancy of classic charm is our cover illustration of a typical California picnic excursion which first appeared in Walter Colton's *Three Years in California*. The engraver was not just uninformed—he was a poet whose inner eye surely told him what it must be like.

California Historical Quarterly

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Abe Ruef Was No Boss: Machine Politics, Reform, and San Francisco

Back of all this Ruef question is the fundamental question, "What is graft?" When a Catholic gives a dollar to a priest to have a Mass said for him the Protestant shouts "graft." When a Protestant gives his minister a fee for funeral services the atheist shouts "graft." When Heney gets \$42,000 from a corporation for 42 hours' work, all his enemies shout "graft." When Ruef gets \$100,000 from another corporation also for work the whole town yells "graft." But the still, small voice still asks the question, "What is graft?"

Father Peter C. Yorke
The Leader, April 11, 1908

TO THE IMMIGRANT POOR, the political boss embodied the guardian angel who provided daily bread and deliverance from the strange new evils surrounding a new urban life. To settlement workers he was the lowborn corruptionist who led the ignorant into temptation by trading in vice and corruption. To the reformer he symbolized the impurity in the body politic which prevented America from reaching its democratic destiny. Perspectives differed, yet the images conjured up by names such as William Tweed, Tom Pendergast, James Curley, and Frank Hague remain deeply etched in historical reflections.¹

Functionally, the traditional boss served in capacities as numerous as the contemporary interpretations. By leading a political organization, he chose the standup candidates for public office. Through them, and through party subordinates, the boss actuated election strategy and manipulated the vote and the voters. The political machine which he headed served as the mechanism whereby the resources for victory were mobilized and dispersed in order to advance personal and organizational goals. And as his machine

fed and grew, it allowed the boss to select and advance an ever-growing number of party functionaries—men engaged in machine maintenance and servicing its varied constituencies.

The central reason why the boss took charge in post-Civil War cities was that virtually no one else did. Governmental forms which had satisfied village needs of an earlier America staggered under the vast immigrant onslaughts and the new demands of an industrial age. The boss installed himself as the professional politician who coordinated or centralized governmental decision-making by shouldering aside the ineffective dilettante who, through a sense of duty, had condescended to take a turn at the commonweal. Richard Croker, the boss who led Tammany Hall to victory under the imperative “To hell with reform,” put the whole matter rather aptly. In response to the question of Lincoln Steffens, “Why should there be bosses when cities had mayors, councils, and judges?” Croker’s answer was simple. “It’s because there’s a mayor *and* a council *and* judges *and*—a hundred other men to deal with. . . . A business man wants to do business with one man, and one who is always there to remember and carry out the—business.” The boss, while normally holding no public office, served as an unofficial nervous system for a decapitated monster whose ever extending extremities might otherwise flay unknowing bystanders with total unpredictability. The boss, at least, was predictable. On this all agreed—favor seekers, settlement workers, and reformers alike.²

In the vortex which surrounded the boss, growing economic interests scrambled for preferment in the expanding urban frontier. There they met and interacted with diffused, adolescent political institutions. Spokesmen and upper echelon functionaries of the business world recognized in bossism an identifiable central point at which to approach urban government. Once the boss was negotiated, the businessman’s problem reduced itself to the normal requirements of production, delivery of goods or services, and the collection of payments. What placed the industrialist or the utilities magnate in this bargaining position was the backing of corporate capital balanced against the need for governmental sanction of his enterprises.³

The boss’s claims rested upon his comprehension of the intricacies of an expanding urban environment and his ability to coordinate and control urban government’s varied activities. To deliver what the business sector sought, the boss relied basically upon officeholders who owed their place to his machine, and who were further dependent upon his goodwill and support for their future well-being. These officeholders comprised the superstructure of a pervasive and enduring invisible government which provided the boss with the administrative wherewithal to coordinate otherwise random governmental functions and factions.⁴

In the 1890’s, Croker commanded an army of 90,000 precinct workers subdivided under the direct control of block and precinct captains who, in

turn, received their directions from, and reported to, their ward leaders. Action on all political fronts was initiated by Croker's orders to his thirty-five ward leaders. All these machine tenders not only voted themselves—once being the minimum—but devoted many working hours to the continuous manipulation of voters. Platoons of politicized boys started their own careers with the machine by flushing out election day drunks and herding them to the polls, accompanied by sorties of repeaters hired by ward leaders. Ward men who would not subordinate themselves to the machine risked losing their places in the only institution they understood, the one which afforded them reason for being.⁵

These large numbers of men who staffed machines found place, direction, and fulfillment within the organization. As functionaries, politicized by a life of machine tending, they performed their prescribed tasks, as routine as they were, firm in the belief that with persistence, time, and loyalty, they too would be advanced in and by the organization. They generally believed formal city government to be irrelevant, if not illegitimate, with only the machine truly representing the people. Because so many shared this attitude and passed it on to their urban descendants, the boss and his machine lived to become a pervasive institution.⁶

The fundamental task of those who served the boss was to deliver the vote on election day. When a ward leader did this regularly and with a heavy majority, almost any other deficiency could be tolerated. If he failed, nothing could redeem him from the scorn of his own vote-maximizing colleagues and the boss's retribution. The organization man never questioned vote maximization as the standard of his personal worth, and at times suffered psychic pressures so intense that all perspective vanished. Such was the case when Bowery leader Tim Sullivan confessed that the Republicans polled all of four votes in one precinct. This total represented one vote greater than his projection, and to reestablish his shaken credibility Sullivan vowed, "I'll find that feller."

To doubt that a boss could deliver on such a promise ignores the extraordinary rapport such men shared with the neighbors among whom they lived and worked. Bosses were community men who, with their heelers, knew everyone in the district, their political attitudes, and the way to reach them. The once mighty Tweed reportedly could identify every fourth New Yorker who passed his prison window. Chicago's John Powers displayed this closeness of bosses to their voters after Jane Addams failed in her celebrated attempt to block the alderman's reelection. Powers agreed that he was not the sort of man reformers liked, but hastened to add: "I am what my people like, and neither Hull House nor all the reformers in town can turn them against me."⁸

The nucleus of a boss's popular support, the urban working class, usually consisted of recent immigrants and their children. Concentrated in slum



1908—Abe Ruef gets a tip during a break in his trial.

districts, they provided the solid political base from which many a boss had emerged, and to which each anchored his machine. During auspicious times the machine aggressively foraged for votes in more prosperous neighborhoods. But when reform crested, the home wards guaranteed the minimum electoral success necessary for access to the patronage of survival. Even though machines were hierarchical in structure, with the boss at the apex, the popular base remained a vital ingredient and a constantly present factor in the boss's thoughts. Day in and day out the machine attended its people with favors, services, and entertainments, while also trading on their fears, hopes, ignorance, and pride. The relationship of the boss to the machine and to the people was characterized not only by pervasive familiarity, but also by stability and predictability.⁹

In their well-defined and circumscribed environment, the participants fully understood one another. Often from similar ethnic groups, they were neighborhood or parish men with limited intellectual horizons. They shared compatible subcultural values and experiences which resulted in a striking uniformity of perception and outlook. No wonder the political boss and his legions within the machine actually could conduct business based upon their own circumspect advice: never write when you can say it, and never say it when you can nod. Such men understood all the nod's implications because they were one in the spirit.¹⁰

As the boss advanced those who shared this uniformity of outlook, the political machine slowly, but persistently, became a formidable institution. When its constituent parts (boss, party functionaries, officeholders, and electoral support) were well-tuned, significant results could follow, as in 1913, when Charles Murphy, Croker's Tammany successor, ordered Gov-

ernor William Sulzer impeached and removed from office following a patronage disagreement. On that occasion Tammany included a massive bureaucracy of disciplined officeholders and party functionaries. They comprised a machine, and Murphy bossed them.¹¹

San Francisco's Abe Ruef considered himself a boss. So did the press, his prosecutors, and the California Supreme Court. At first glance Ruef does appear every bit a political boss—granted, an unusual one. Though an upper-middle-class Jew and valedictorian of the University of California's class of 1883, Ruef enjoyed urban politics. The dynamics of local power captivated him every bit as much as they did the eastern Irish who used political machines to crawl from teeming tenement slums. During his formative years Ruef observed how ward politicians gathered votes, distributed patronage, and tended their organizations. While at the apex of his own career he directed San Francisco's state legislators and the city's delegates to state conventions. Acting in a private capacity as an attorney, Ruef commanded incredible fees which he then passed on, in part, to appropriate officeholders who gratified the desires of his clients—usually franchise-seeking corporations.¹²

All this activity resided clearly within the preserve normally held by the urban political boss. If anything, Abe Ruef seemed not only to meet the standard set by the more common Irish bosses, he surpassed it. He manipulated the political process from behind the scenes with cunning and dexterity. He wrote speeches and constructed political platforms. When the occasion required, Ruef even functioned as his own best advance man. He valiantly defended his own handiwork with a cultivated mind and ready wit before which hostile audiences first mellowed and then applauded under the spell of his thoroughly engaging platform personality.¹³

Ruef appears the embodiment of the traditional boss, until one basic question is asked of his brief but extraordinary record. Who did boss Ruef boss? Upon close analysis the equally extraordinary answer is that Ruef bossed virtually no one. To conclude that this qualified him as not just a boss, but somewhat of a mystic besides, would be to go beyond the bounds of history. The more appropriate conclusion seems to be that Ruef, having no machine, was really no boss at all.¹⁴

As Walton Bean clearly stated in his study, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco*, Ruef was an opportunist. Only indirectly or by interpellation, however, can one realize that Ruef stood at the apex of no machine and that the title "boss" is therefore a confusing misnomer. Ruef's powers were derived from his personal relationship with Mayor Eugene E. Schmitz, the attractive orchestra leader whose nomination Ruef finessed through the convention of the new and politically naive Union Labor Party. Ruef's temporary powers rested not on years of patient machine building, but upon his clear

perception of San Francisco's shifting political tides and his ability to navigate their surges.¹⁵

At the turn of the twentieth century, San Francisco was well on its way toward becoming one of the nation's most tightly organized labor towns. Union spokesmen had organized politically before Ruef intervened and captured their embryonic movement. He had perceived more clearly than they that a labor candidate could win in a three-cornered race against the traditional parties. Unlike the classic urban boss, Ruef did not spend a long and tedious life meticulously cultivating a political organization rooted in an urban slum. His attention to the electorate instead remained incidental to his manipulations at the top. In spite of his youthful exposures, Ruef never developed as a ballot stuffer, never became a head cracker. He took the electorate ready-made and presented it with what, under his accurate assessment of the given conditions, it would find acceptable: Schmitz for mayor on the Union Labor ticket.¹⁶

San Francisco's history of phenomenal ethnic diversity has not been sufficiently explored as an explanation for the rise and fall of both Ruef and his prosecutors. Ruef recognized the rising surge of labor sentiment and, as an ethnic himself, appreciated the subcultural preferences and affinities of the electorate. He encouraged the Schmitz candidacy not out of friendship or caprice but with calculation. The future mayor carried the German name of his old country father at a time when 101,000 San Franciscans had either been born in Germany or, like Schmitz himself, were of one German parent. Schmitz's mother was from County Clair when the city's politicized Irish and their children accounted for another 95,000. The total population did not exceed 343,000. Further reflection upon the religious composition of the ethnic metropolis reinforces the wisdom of Ruef's behavior. The year the earthquake and fire forced urban renewal upon the city, its church-going sector totaled 143,000. Of those, an incredible 116,000 knelt with Schmitz on Sundays in Catholic churches. Ruef's intuitive grasp of the yet undeveloped art of voting behavior analysis did not mislead him. In a three-cornered race the question should not have been, could Schmitz win, but rather, how could he possibly lose?¹⁷

So rapid a rise and fall for Abe Ruef was possible not because he was a political boss, but because he was not. During the interval of time a traditional boss would have needed to assemble a machine and wheel his horde of ballot stuffers into attack columns, Ruef's opportunity would have passed. Once on top, however, a boss's machine would have had staying power and resilience. Non-boss Ruef neither suffered from a machine's limitations, nor enjoyed its advantages.

Political bosses selected candidates with great care because, once in office, they became temporarily independent of the machine, particularly if they could be satisfied with only one term. More dangerous yet, if reform



Abe Ruef, "Boss" of San Francisco, confronts a Morning Call photographer. The associates in the background probably are not gunmen.

crested and appeared to be the wave of the future, a hastily chosen incumbent turned opportunist might spurn his benefactor for preferment with the reformers. The dangers inherent to a machine in this set of circumstances invited caution and encouraged the boss to advance men of patience, loyalty, and diligence—not independence. Circumspect bosses relied on their close personal knowledge of men through long term affiliations and family reputations. If a prospective candidate was a virtual unknown, the boss might advance him, provided a confidant or, better yet, the parish priest could say that the lad's deceased father or uncle had been a regular.¹⁸

Contacts such as these, normally available to a boss, were largely denied to Ruef. As an opportunist he was an interloper in union affairs, not an unfriendly one at first, but still hardly one of the boys. Also, he was religiously isolated. Politics and unionism, undoubtedly, were not discussed on the steps of Temple Israel with the degree of fervor which characterized similar exchanges after mass on St. Peter's steps in the heart of the Irish Mission district. Without a machine to aid him in the selection of candidates, Ruef chose some poorly and paid four years and seven months of his life as the price.

The critical Union Labor Party ticket which he formulated in 1905 demonstrated several points. First of all, as an impresario he relied upon his own intuitive insights into the public temper in order to judge Union Labor's popularity. Actual bosses enjoyed the steadier services of Tim Sullivan types who counted or pushed noses on a much more individual and tangible basis. Though highly perceptive in many cases, Ruef nonetheless remained a loner without institutional support or the valuable feedback of colleagues sharing his interests and his environment.

In preparing his slate for the city election of 1905, Ruef's osmotic perceptions erred. He expected that the only Union Labor candidate capable of victory was incumbent Mayor Schmitz. Ruef's selection of an 18 member slate for the board of supervisors was highly influenced by this personal conviction that few, at best, would win anyway. His dire forebodings, shared by those on whom he wished to confer the party's nomination, aggravated the ultimate selection of candidates. Had Ruef actually bossed a machine, he would have collected hard intelligence based upon more than personal intuition. Even if the tendency still ran toward pessimism, a machine, almost by definition, was able to generate aspiring candidates. And such candidates, if possessing no other qualities, normally were loyal to their boss. At the filing deadline, guided by the false presumption of defeat, Ruef filled the Union Labor ticket with candidates, some of whom he had never met and most of whom he really did not know. The great exception, of course, was Schmitz, whom Ruef hoped to have reelected over the fusion candidate of the Democratic and Republican parties.¹⁹

Ruef was surprised and even shocked when the entire Union Labor slate, including mayor, supervisors, and district attorney, captured their offices. Since the hastily chosen supervisors were not politicized men disciplined by a life of machine tending, Ruef never controlled them. These new officeholders were innocents in politics and, unlike their counterparts in eastern urban centers, they owed fealty and obedience to no political entity beyond themselves. The Union Labor Party was still new and temporary in 1905, and their relations with it had been cursory at most. The supervisors were not machine underlings who had been advanced gradually by a boss from one organizational position to the next after years of proven loyalty, servility, and learning. Excesses notwithstanding, the political behavior of the boss's subordinates was conditioned by the pervasive and enduring machine. The lives and welfare of their own slum neighbors, as well as their own political future, depended upon their continuing orthodoxy and subordination to the machine. Since this was not the case in San Francisco, the Union Labor supervisors (in a sense Progressive reformers could not be expected to understand) were actually free individuals, unrestrained by party or faction. Unfortunately, their conscience was their guide.

San Francisco's graft prosecution succeeded in incarcerating Abe Ruef precisely because he was not a boss. Without a system to control the Union Labor supervisors, Ruef resorted to a series of bribes which were directly attached to individual votes cast by the supervisors on specific issues. Even though he was the most successful bidder for their votes he failed to purchase their fidelity. The best Ruef could do was to rent them temporarily.²⁰

Because the bribe-taking supervisors were never part of a political machine, they suffered, in a sense, a deprivation. They had not been exposed from youth to a systematic political education. And, as a result, they were ignorant of the dangers of free-lance bribery—the mirage which beckoned them to disaster. With no machine and no boss, graft took no precedent over privateering. Without a machine to educate and screen, Ruef quickly advanced the wrong men into political office. Not only did he choose politically ignorant supervisors, he also chose a politically honest district attorney who, without personal loyalty to Ruef, fully cooperated with the reformers in prosecuting Ruef.

A basic assumption which energized many Progressive reformers was the belief that they were standing up for democracy by striking down the boss and his machine. In their minds the boss stood between the people and their government. As elsewhere, avid Bay Area expounders of this cliché lived in suburbia while trying to reform the city. To such reformers the public welfare was much too important to be left to professional politicians, not to mention alleged bosses and their henchmen. Rather, the way to govern cities was to place their affairs in the free hands of “capable businessmen” who would “discharge their duty . . . without regard to claims of political support.” As for Ruef, reformers dismissed him as “a self-confessed criminal and boodler and scoundrel, the wretch of a thousand crimes. . . .”²¹

The San Francisco graft prosecutors shared this opinion of Ruef but also hoped, in the long run, to leapfrog over him and into the corporate world where the large franchise-related bribes had originated. Operating through the district attorney's office, they first ensnared the gullible supervisors who accepted bribes tendered by an agent provocateur whom the reformers had blackmailed into collaboration. Confessions incriminating Ruef were then extracted from these bribe-takers, in part, by offers of immunity. The supervisors admitted accepting larger payoffs from Ruef for their votes on the board of supervisors. But when Ruef declined to implicate corporate executives in any criminal activity and Schmitz denied any wrong doing whatever, the reformers found themselves unable to reach the next level of complicity. The prosecution, in time, did remove Schmitz from office and exiled Ruef to San Quentin prison, but failed to follow the bribes through Ruef to the sources.²²

While all this transpired, the corrupt supervisors remained in office doing what the prosecutors directed. Upon request they even advanced, temporarily, one of their own discredited and chastised colleagues to Schmitz's vacated office. This move allowed the reformers more time to locate a respectable citizen and install him as mayor.²³

This episode clearly illustrates how the prosecutors, by the ability to honor their immunity agreements at their own discretion, controlled that part of the government legally charged with the legislative function. And through this irregular state of affairs the prosecutors were able to name the man that these same supervisors obediently appointed as mayor, thus extending the power of the prosecution into the executive office itself. Unlike Ruef, the reformers did not pay the supervisors for these votes. The votes were delivered without even a haggle because, for the first time in their political lives, the Union Labor Party supervisors were bossed. By virtue of the immunity agreements, the prosecution controlled the board of supervisors and the mayor's office too. The prosecutors spoke; the supervisors jumped.²⁴

The identity of the individual members of the graft prosecution, all prominent at the time, has been clearly fixed in history. William H. Langdon, Ruef's own uninformed choice for district attorney on the successful 1905 Union Labor Party ticket, provided official sanction for the reform faction. Fremont Older, editor of the *Bulletin*, contributed the original impetus for reform by his press crusade against Ruef and Schmitz. In time he achieved the substantial financial support of Rudolph Spreckels which enabled them to engage the nationally known corruption cracker, Francis J. Heney, and his sleuth, William J. Burns, along with a small army of privately retained detectives.²⁵

More significant is that through the graft prosecution San Francisco became governed extra-legally and undemocratically by a private and narrowly based clique. Following the collapse of a scheme to ventilate their junto procedures, Spreckels, Heney, and Langdon installed Dr. Edward R. Taylor as mayor. They did this through their control of the corrupt supervisors, the appointing body. Only one of these three prosecutors, Langdon, held public office by virtue of an election. However, in all likelihood, his behavior was directed by his dynamic appointee, Heney, and by Spreckels, the private individual on whose bankroll the prosecution fed. By placing Taylor in the mayor's office, the triumvirate chose a man as unrepresentative of San Francisco as he was respectable and acceptable—to those who chose him. Taylor's record of service included the directorship of Cooper Medical College and the deanship of Hastings College of the Law. He practiced medicine and law and later served Stanford University as a trustee. Unlike James D. Phelan and Schmitz before him, and unlike Patrick McCarthy who succeeded him, Mayor Taylor was neither an ethnic

nor a Catholic. In fact, the contemporary Catholic mind would have considered him even a poor Protestant since at age 69 the mayor read "joyous poems" on Sunday mornings while his decidedly more youthful bride attended services alone.²⁶

San Francisco's most politicized ethnic minority was the Irish Catholic working class. Throughout the graft trials their militant weekly, *The Leader*, viciously assailed those associated with the prosecution. The Irish press objected to a district attorney's office financed by private capital and supported by a crusading newspaper which deprived the people of their rightful possession—democratically acquired political power. The editor, Father Peter C. Yorke, a labor partisan who had initially established *The Leader* to support unionism, objected to Taylor's all but complete elimination of Catholics from municipal appointments. In the November, 1909, election, ethnic-labor politicians joined Nob Hill capitalists to forge a new coalition against the prosecutors who were still trying to convict the bribegiving executives. The day Irish-born Patrick McCarthy stood for election, the building trades council declared a holiday throughout San Francisco's construction industry. Union members and their friends turned out and, not trusting the prosecutors still in control of the mechanisms of government, they spent \$2,500 on poll watchers. When anti-prosecution McCarthy won by a large margin, political power returned to its legitimate and traditional possessors by a thoroughly legal, democratic counterstroke.²⁷

Two distinct notions have seriously interfered with perceptive interpretations of bossism versus reform in American urban history. First, and more general, is the appealing but false assumption that criminal behavior is never compatible with democracy. If a corrupt boss were somehow removed, the will of the people would triumph, so thought reformers. This fixation endured even though the fact that reformers came and went, while the objects of their reforms remained, suggested otherwise. After his studies of New York, Daniel P. Moynihan concluded that "the intermittent discovery that New York does have representative government leads to periodic reform movements."²⁸

Second, poetic retreat, San Francisco's equivalent of moralizing, has been used to explain the rise and fall of reform. After all, was not San Francisco cosmopolitan and impish, famous for its Barbary Coast, French restaurants, splash, and color? But a retreat into impressionism is unsatisfactory. It can explain, or not explain (with equal dexterity) a Jewish sophisticate as a boss, or a swinging impresario, unincumbered by the inhibitions of a machine and its dullards waiting to be bossed. Such a non-interpretation may be congenial to professional San Franciscans but, in light of the rise of ethnic history as an area of scholarly interest, such a flight from realism is no longer needed.

Following the celebrated graft prosecutions, San Franciscans elected Eugene Schmitz to a series of terms on the board of supervisors (a city-wide and not a ward office), not because the city was impish, and not because of the advice of Lincoln Steffens that exposed grafters could be safely kept in office as "good dogs." San Franciscans elected and reelected Schmitz because, like them, he was an ethnic, and in the end a rather famous one at that. The question of guilt or innocence, after the initial shock wore off, simply was not relevant to old country parents who identified with their Eugene. Blood of their blood and flesh of their flesh, they preferred him to his prosecutors who, by kicking Schmitz, kicked them, the majority.²⁹

NOTES

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2. Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, 174-5; William L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (New York, 1963), 82-3; Alfred Connable and Edward Silberfarb, *Tigers of Tammany: Nine Men Who Ran New York* (New York, 1967), 198, 218; Callow, *Tweed*, 78; Lincoln Steffens, *Autobiography* (New York, 1931), 236.
3. Callow, *Tweed*, 166; Hofstadter, *Age of Reform*, 174-5.
4. Lyle W. Dorsett, *The Pendergast Machine* (New York, 1968), p. 87; Callow, *Tweed*, 102-5, 116-20.
5. Connable and Silberfarb, *Tigers of Tammany*, 211, 216-7, 182-3, 199; Callow, *Tweed*, 212-3.
6. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (2d ed.; Cambridge, Mass., 1970), 224-8; Charles F. Murphy, "A Tribute to Plunkitt. . . ." in Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany*, xxvi.
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10. Edward M. Levine, *The Irish and Irish Politicians* (Notre Dame, 1966), 101-7; Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, 227-9.

11. Weiss, *Charles Francis Murphy*, 55-9; Josephson, *Al Smith*, 149-51.

12. San Francisco *Call*, Oct. 14, 1906, 29, 33; San Francisco *Examiner*, Oct. 3, 1907, 3; Chief Justice William H. Beatty to C. K. McClatchy in *Sacramento Bee*, April 29, 1908, 9; *The People v. Eugene E. Schmitz* (1907-08), 7 California Appellate Reports, 373; Verne A. Stadtmen, ed., *The Centennial Record of the University of California* (Berkeley, 1967), 137; San Francisco *Chronicle*, Jan. 5, 1903, 1; Jan. 12, 1908, 17; Abraham Ruef, "The Road I Traveled: An Autobiographic Account of my Career from University to Prison with an Intimate Recital of the Corrupt Alliance between Big Business and Politics in San Francisco," San Francisco *Bulletin*, July 15, 1912, 8; July 16, 8; July 29, 8; July 31, 10; Aug. 10, 13; *Bulletin*, Jan. 4, 1903, 25.

13. Ruef, "The Road I Traveled," *Bulletin*, June 10, 1912, 12; July 22, 8; *Bulletin*, Oct. 15, 1906, 6; *Call*, Oct. 14, 1906, 29.

14. In his memoirs Ruef wrote of bossism and machine government but mostly in the abstract, as a political scientist examining a national phenomenon. He disdained ballot stuffing. Ruef, "The Road I Traveled," *Bulletin*, June 18-20, 1912, each on 12.

15. Walton Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco: The Story of The Union Labor Party, Big Business, And The Graft Prosecution* (Berkeley, 1968), viii, 20-7.

16. Robert E. L. Knight, *Industrial Relations in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1900-1918* (Berkeley, 1960), 59, 89, 98-9.

17. San Francisco *Leader*, Oct. 3, 1903, 8; United States Census Office, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900* (Washington: 1901), I, 738-9, 868, 876-7, 884-5, 892-3, 900-1, 904-5; United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1906* (Washington, 1910), pt. I, 299-300; James P. Walsh, "Regent Peter C. Yorke and the University of California, 1900-1912" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1970), 30-4.

18. Levine, *Irish and Irish Politicians*, 146-55; Callow, *Tweed*, 121-2; Mike Royko, "Hizzoner," *Playboy*, 18 (Mar., 1971), 165.

19. For the details of Ruef's candidate selection see Bean, *Ruef*, 61-3.

20. Ruef, "The Road I Traveled," *Bulletin*, July 29, 1912, 8; July 31, 10; Aug. 10, 13.

21. *Leader*, Feb. 1, 1908, 1; Berkeley *Daily Gazette*, Jan. 21, 1908, 1; Feb. 22, 4; Nov. 20, 7; Monroe E. Deutsch, ed., *The Abundant Life* (Berkeley, 1943), 307; Beverly L. Hodghead, "The General Features of the Berkeley Charter," a speech delivered to the League of California Municipalities, Sept. 21, 1909, 4, 7, Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley.

22. Steffens, *Autobiography*, 557; Steffens, "William J. Burns, Intriguer: The Keenest of Detectives and the Story of His Hardest Job," *American Magazine*, LXV (April, 1908), 617-20; Francis J. Heney, "Parts of the Story of the Prosecution," *The Liberator*, July 24, 1909, 3-4; H. M. Owens to San Francisco supervisors in *Bulletin*, July 27, 1907, 2; Text of supervisors' confessions to Grand Jury in *Call*, April 26, 1907, 17-22; Fremont Older, *My Own Story* (New York, 1926), 96-8.

23. Franklin Hichborn, "The System," as *Uncovered by the San Francisco Graft Prosecution* (San Francisco, 1915), 230-3, n., 249.

24. *Examiner*, July 30, 1907, 1, 2; *Bulletin*, July 27, 1907, 1, 2.
25. William H. Langdon, "The Story of the Great Struggle," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, XLIII (Aug., 1907), 440; Older, *My Own Story*, 80; Heney, "Parts of the Story," *The Liberator*, July 17, 1909, 3-4; Joseph J. Dwyer, "The Liberating of San Francisco: A Review of the Battle," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, XLIII (Aug., 1907), 442-4; Bean, *Ruef*, 40-57; Text of Older testimony at libel proceedings in *Bulletin*, March 17, 1908, 1, 2.
26. *Who's Who In America, 1908-1909* (Chicago, ?), 1860-1; *Who's Who In America, 1914-1915*, 2306-7; Steffens, a participant, referred to the San Francisco graft prosecution as "Rudolph Spreckels's" and failed even to mention Langdon, *Autobiography*, 552-60; *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, Feb. 15, 1908, 4.
27. *Leader*, Jan. 11, 1902, 1; Oct. 22, 1904, 8; June 22, 1907, 1; Jan. 11, 1908, 1; Mar. 14, 1908, 1; Jan. 16, 1909, 4; for a convenient summary view see Mar. 14, 1908, 4; Knight, *Industrial Relations*, 220. That Taylor was elected in his own right in 1907 is not incompatible with San Francisco's ethnic diversity as a key to understanding. The city's laboring ethnics were absorbing the Protestant ethic (which makes one wonder how exclusively Protestant the notion was or is). They worked hard, saved their money, and invested. They were surprised, shocked, and embarrassed by the disclosures of corruption. The longer the trials wore on and the greater the procedural excesses, then the more San Francisco's working-class ethnics reverted back to their original social, economic, and religious orientations. The opportunism of reform, like the opportunism of Ruef, had no staying power.
28. Moynihan, "When the Irish Ran New York," *The Reporter*, 24 (June 8, 1961), 32.
29. Bean, *Ruef*, vii, 315-6, 226-7. For the level to which misinterpretation can be driven by the journalistic approach to history abetted by imperceptive contemporary observation see Bruce Bliven, "The Boodling Boss and the Musical Mayor," *American Heritage*, XI (Dec., 1959), 8-11, 100-4.

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San Francisco 1846-1848:

The Coming of the Land Speculator

ON THE MORNING of July 8, 1846, a foggy day most likely, the sleepy Mexican *pueblo* of Yerba Buena, later known as San Francisco, witnessed the hoisting of the American flag. When Capt. Montgomery of the United States sloop of war *Portsmouth* entered town without the least resistance on the part of its inhabitants, he was occupying an essentially Anglo-American settlement amidst Mexican territory. Its founder, William A. Richardson, was an Englishman, its first inhabitants, Jacob P. Leese and Nathan Spear, were natives of Nellistown (Ohio) and Boston respectively. These men, and a handful of fellow Americans and Europeans flocking together in the ensuing years, decided to settle here because this was the spot where the few merchantmen, hide ships and others, used to anchor. Thus Yerba Buena became the commercial center of Northern California—if a shabby place consisting of a few shanties and houses may be called a commercial center. Still, despite its insignificance in terms of volume of trade, Yerba Buena was the first community in California subsisting entirely on commerce, in a country whose economy was fundamentally agrarian and non-commercial.¹ Yerba Buena anticipated, on a very small scale, the transition from subsistence agriculture to commercial enterprise which was a general characteristic of California's economic life between the end of the Mexican rule and the beginning of the Gold Rush.

It is true that Yerba Buena's economic growth was greatly enhanced by the immigrants who followed the American flag in great numbers; but the basic principle of marketing goods did not change with their arrival. There appeared, however, a new and important article of commerce on the market that, in Mexican times, had not been considered a marketable commodity: land. And there appeared a new type of businessman: the land speculator.

Land speculation was possibly the most important and certainly the most interesting consequence of the American takeover. It is the purpose of this paper to present, with the aid of the real estate registers of the town,² a quantitative analysis of the phenomenon, and also to draw some general conclusions as to why land speculation was essentially linked to the Ameri-

can conquest of California and why, on a more general level, it was a common characteristic of the American westward expansion as a whole.

For the *Californios* soil held no special attraction. It was, like the sun and the stars, a most precious gift of nature; but since it was available in next to unlimited quantities, it was, to them, completely worthless as a trading article. In colonial California the problem was by no means the acquisition of land but much rather its cultivation. Accordingly, under the Mexican laws very large tracts of land were granted, sometimes up to 48,000 acres to one individual alone—but always with the provision that at least part of the land had to be improved by the grantee within one year. Moreover, the owner did not enjoy all the privileges ordinarily attached to property.³ He was, for instance, not allowed to raise a mortgage on his grant, neither could he donate nor sell it. The prevention of land speculation was no more than a secondary effect of these clauses: their main purpose consisted in furthering the colonization of the country. This could only be brought about by granting land to persons who were not only willing but positively bound by law to personally take possession of their grant, to live on it, and improve it. The law, therefore, stipulated that only he who lived on his land could rightfully own it, which, of course, automatically excluded the possibility for one individual to own more than one unit of land. Also, in order better to secure the settlement of California with a population loyal to Mexico, land grants were—at least theoretically—made out to Mexicans by birth or to naturalized Mexican citizens exclusively. Naturalization implied the applicants' willingness to subject themselves to Mexican laws and customs and, above all, their adherence to the Roman Catholic faith. Many a good New England Puritan forsook his religion, not for a pottage of lentils but for a tract of land of some 50 square miles. Those who stubbornly clung to their religious convictions—like Nathan Spear of Yerba Buena—never held any legal title to land.⁴

All these provisions made in connection with the grants of *ranchos* analogously applied to the much smaller lots of Yerba Buena and other *pueblos*. One lot usually measured 50 by 50 varas (one vara corresponding to 33 inches) and was granted in return for a fee of \$12.50. In addition to the restrictions already mentioned, the deeds stipulated that the lots had to be fenced in and built upon within one year, counted from the issue of the grant. Those who failed to erect a building in time were sometimes, upon petition, granted a prolongation of the term.⁵

In Mexican California, as elsewhere, laws seemed to be made in order to be circumvented. Few of the lots granted in Yerba Buena were actually fenced in, although all of them were improved inasmuch as the owners had built at least a shanty or some other kind of shelter that could be legally termed *casa*.⁶ In practice the improvements were not dictated by law but by necessity. Buildings were a prerequisite for the successful trader who

needed storage room, offices, and living quarters for himself and his employees. On the other hand, he had not much use for fences: he had no cattle to be kept within his lot, nor did his neighbors and fellow traders possess any stock to be kept out of his property. The paragraph requesting the *solares* to be fenced in actually reflects the basically agrarian concept of the law. According to Mexican definition, a *pueblo* was a community of small farmers (or rather gardeners) tilling and cultivating the lots they had been granted. Although the climate of Yerba Buena was singularly unsuited for the growing of almonds, peaches, and the like, and although the town was from the start an exclusively commercial community, the fence stipulation was faithfully copied in every single deed, thus bearing witness to the fact that mulish bureaucracy was thriving even in this remote corner of the world.

Contrary to the law, lots changed hands quite freely whenever the necessity arose. Strangely enough, the deeds of sale were often drawn up before, and witnessed by, the *alcalde* or mayor of Yerba Buena who, on those occasions, acted as notary public. If during the Mexican era of the town (1835-1846) no more than twelve lots changed hands it was obviously not because the inhabitants of that time abhorred illegal acts, but rather because there was no particular demand for real estate. In all, the authorities granted no more than 64 lots between 1835 and 1846, so that there remained plenty of vacant *solares* to satisfy the needs of all newcomers who could reasonably be expected to settle in town.⁷ The lots that actually did change hands were sold not because of the real estate involved but rather because of the premises erected on the land. In 1841 the Hudson's Bay Company thus paid to Jacob P. Leese the sum of \$4,600, and this primarily for the house he had built in 1838 and which had cost him, at that time, \$4,892; the lot which the building had been erected on was, in itself, of little interest to the purchaser.⁸

The same Jacob P. Leese may be cited as a law offender in yet another connection: he was in possession of more than one lot.⁹ There is something to be said in his defense, however; for one thing, he was granted his second lot by local authorities who did not seem to mind this kind of procedure, and furthermore, he was not the only inhabitant of Yerba Buena who indulged unpunished in his brand of unlawfulness. Provisions had been made by the authorities for the land along the shore to remain public property. When this usage fell into disregard Leese seized the opportunity and acquired a piece of land near the beach.¹⁰ But clearly Leese's motive was neither land speculation nor investment in real estate. For him it was merely a matter of gaining a better location for his dealings with the ships anchoring off the shore. It was no inherent value of the land that could induce Leese and a few others to apply for more than one lot, for inherent value there was none.

TABLE I
Grants of Lots from July, 1846, to March, 1848.

DATE	MONTHLY INCREASE			TOTAL LOTS GRANTED
	50 V.- SURVEY	100 V.- SURVEY	BEACH- LOTS	
1846				
July				64
August				64
September				64
October	1			65
November	12			77
December	16			93
1847				
January	18	11		122
February	33	1		156
March	88	8		252
April	29	7		288
May	42	8		338
June	88	5		431
July	52	2		485
August	19			504
September	12	2	219*	637
October	36	6		779
November	10	3		792
December				792
1848				
January				792
February				792
March	52			844

* Beach-lots were sold from the end of July to December, 1847, most of them at an auction on September 20-23, 1847.

Source: Computed from Alfred Wheeler, *Land Titles in San Francisco and the Laws affecting the same* (San Francisco, 1852).

Circumstances changed almost immediately after the conquest of California by the United States. During the eleven years of Mexican supremacy 64 lots had been granted; within the first twenty months of United States administration the number of grants rose to 844 (see Table I). This increase is partly explained by the influx of settlers following in the wake of the United States invasion. Table II shows that, whereas in June, 1846, 150 people had been living in Yerba Buena, the town boasted more than five times that number of settlers in March, 1848. But the number of lots granted within the same period of time multiplied by a factor of thirteen. Still, comparing the number of lots (844) with the number of inhabitants

TABLE II
Population of Yerba Buena, 1842 - 1848

Age Groups	1842 Dec.	1846 June	1847 June	1848 March
Adult Male	17		180	575
Female	4		66	177
Children	5		129	60
Total	26	c. 150	375	812

Sources: Padron de San Francisco 1842, MS C-R 9, Bancroft Library; *California Star* (San Francisco), Aug. 28, 1847; *Ibid.*, March 18, 1848.

(812), it would seem, at first sight, that the basic principle of "one person, one lot" had been kept up fairly well. Upon closer examination this is quite evidently not true. From the sum total of 812 inhabitants the women and children have to be deducted. If the remaining 575 male adults had equally divided the 844 lots among themselves there would have resulted an average of nearly one lot and a half per person. Furthermore, a respectable number of the persons present at the local census were transients who had no intention to settle at Yerba Buena; as a rule they were not interested in purchasing land and have therefore, to a large extent, to be counted out as lot owners. The actual number of lot holders was thus even smaller and the average amount of lots per holder even greater.

From table I it appears that there were three different categories of lots. The 50-vara survey and the 100-vara survey both derived their names from the surface area of the single lots which comprised 50 by 50 varas (137½ by 137½ feet) and 100 by 100 varas (275 feet square) respectively; the beach- or water-lots were named after their location seawards of the high-water mark. The total number of grants mentioned above includes the grants of all three categories. In a more detailed discussion, however, it will be advisable to treat these three different kinds of lots separately. A very limited number of 50-vara lots had been laid out during the Mexican era, and they had amply satisfied the needs of the population. The 100-vara lots and the water-lots were surveyed and made available in 1847—another indication of the rapid expansion of the real estate business after the changing of the flag. Although the new surveys offered new possibilities for the prospective landowners, the activity was still centered on the 50-vara lots. This becomes quite evident when the total of lots granted (844) are broken down into 50-vara lots (572), 100-vara lots (53), and beach-lots (219). The most prominent category of lots, the 50-vara lots, the number of which was substantially enlarged by a survey of Jasper O'Farrell in 1847, will be discussed first.¹¹

In order to circumvent the Mexican laws still in force after the American

Most prominent 50v.-lot-holders, 1846-1848

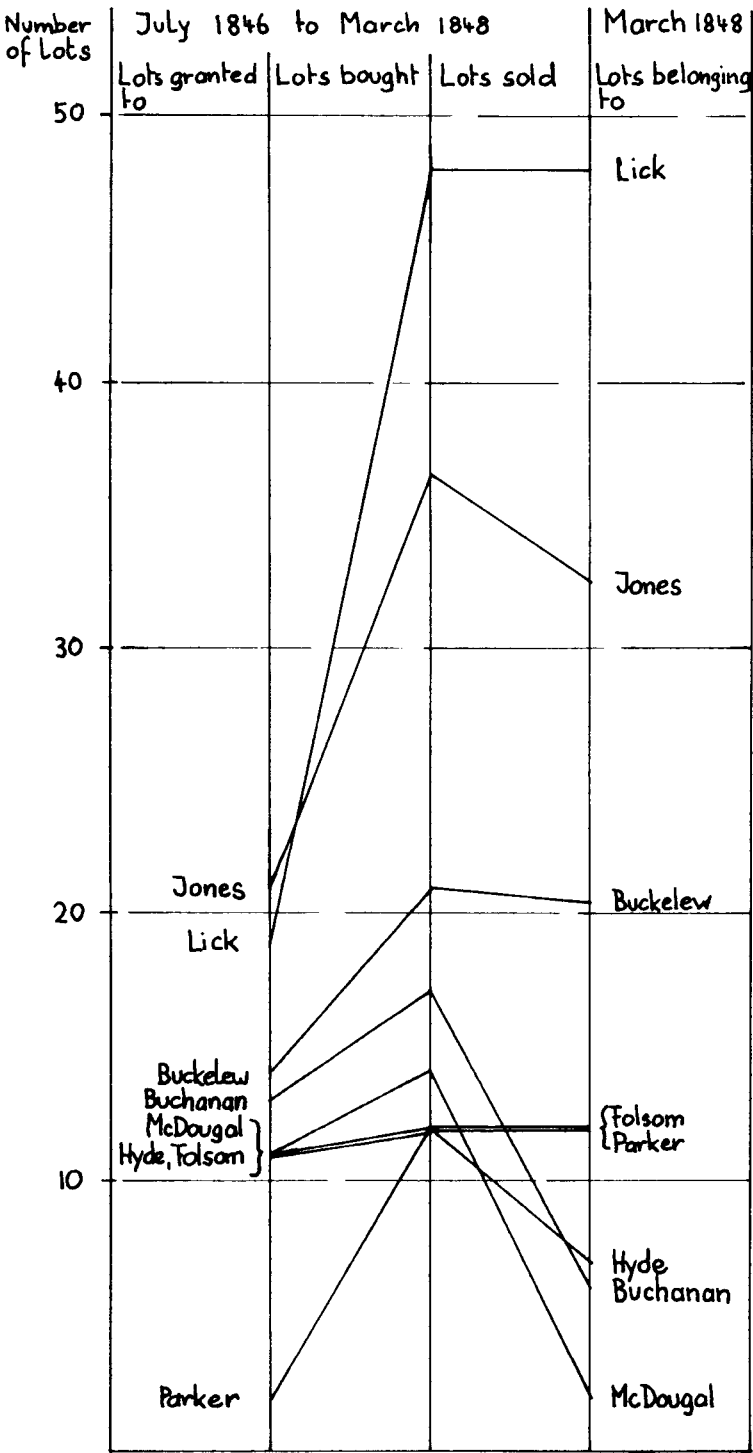


TABLE III

SOURCE:
Book A of Spanish Records; Miscellaneous Transfer Deeds, Book B 'O.K.'; Transfers of Deeds A; Book B of Transfer Deeds. (MSS in San Francisco County Archives) Wheeler, *op.cit.*, schedule A.

conquest, paupers, vagabonds, and transients were frequently used as dummies by land speculators who encouraged them to petition for lots, promising to buy the land at an advance price immediately after the issue of the grant. Out of the 42 50-vara lots granted in May, 1847, 22 were resold within ten days or less—a fact that clearly demonstrates the wide use of this scheme; four of these lots changed hands even before the formal deeds had been made out.¹² William Squire Clark, after whom Clark's Point was named, enlarges in his *Recollections of a Pioneer* on this subject and also points out that the local authorities could not possibly fail to notice what was going on sooner or later.¹³ But the town council, whose members were among the most active land speculators, were far from prohibiting such pro forma grants; instead, they cancelled the provision of "one person one lot," thus making it possible for petitioners legally to be granted several lots.¹⁴

There can be no doubt that the Mexican system, based upon a completely different theory of colonization and exploitation, was antiquated and needed revision. But a short sighted policy it must be called to cancel one paragraph of the law without adjusting the others accordingly. By permitting speculators to hold more than one lot the town council implicitly confirmed that the distribution of real estate depended on the financial means of the individual and his desire to invest in landed property exclusively. Purchasing and selling lots thus became part of the new competitive profit system. The logical conclusion would have been for the town to join in and take advantage of the new situation—in other words, to sell the lots still remaining in its possession in line with market conditions to the highest bidder. This was not done; the lots were granted in return for the same old nominal fee of \$12.50, as if they still were, as in Mexican times, a special bonus for those willing to bear the hardships involved in colonizing a remote and desolate country.¹⁵ As it was, the ordinance of the town council worked entirely for the benefit of the land speculators. Most active of these was Elbert P. Jones, himself a member of the council, who took out 21 deeds in his name; he was closely followed by James Lick, who owned 19 grants (see table III). Fifteen other individuals or partnerships were granted five lots or more each: together they were granted 179 lots, or 31% of the 572 50-vara lots ever granted from the founding of the *pueblo* in 1835 up to March, 1848. There were two distinctive groups among the prominent land speculators. The short-term speculators applied for lots and sold them almost immediately after the issue of the grants, as did John Buchanan, who was granted 14 lots, of which, by March, 1848, he retained no more than six (see table III). Others, such as James Lick, were quietly accumulating lot after lot, increasing their property not only by taking out grants as often as possible but also by buying lots whenever they had an opportunity to do so (see table III).

Before embarking upon a more detailed discussion of the practices of the land speculators, it is desirable to consider the distribution of the water-lots and the 100-vara lots mentioned above. In the O'Farrell survey, Market Street is the southern boundary of the original 50-vara section; it meets the roads between the 50-vara lots at an angle of 45 degrees. In the same survey Market Street represents the northern boundary of a rectangular grid that divides the land into blocks containing six lots of 100 varas square. The same method of granting land used for the 50-vara lots were adopted here, except that the fees amounted to \$25 instead of \$12.50. As the 100-vara section was at that time situated well beyond the center of the town, these lots were in no great demand. The first of them was given away on January 14, 1847, and no more than 53 100-vara lots were granted up to the end of March, 1848.

As to the water- or beach-lots things were quite different. In the first Mexican survey of the *pueblo*, in 1835, a strip of land along the shore was set aside for public use. But this provision was not enforced for any considerable period of time. The local authorities yielded to the pressure of the merchants, who wished to establish themselves as near the shore as possible. By the end of the Mexican rule over Yerba Buena almost all the lots along Montgomery Street, which at that time ran along the shore, lay in the hands of private persons.¹⁶ There remained the extensive mudflats seawards of the highwater mark. But this land, regularly flooded at high tide, was of no use unless raised by depositing huge masses of earth. So far there had been no need to go to such expense. After the American conquest, however, the demand for real estate increased constantly, and it was most conspicuous in the center of activity—around the port; it thus seemed worthwhile to take the necessary steps. The *alcalde* ordered the mudflats to be surveyed and divided into lots of $16 \frac{2}{3}$ by 50 varas. The layout was in line with the adjoining 50-vara survey; the east-west oriented streets ran on into the bay and, together with the streets lined out parallel to Montgomery Street, they cut the whole section into square blocks, each block containing twelve lots. From the very beginning these water-lots were not granted upon petition but sold at current prices, most of them at the auction held from September 20 to September 23, 1847.¹⁷ The firm of Mellus & Howard held 31 water-lots, and William Leidesdorff, a trader as well, owned 30 (see table IV). Their concentration on real estate along the waterfront is emphasized by the fact that both Mellus & Howard and Leidesdorff possessed comparatively few other lots. Thus they do not appear in table III, where the most important 50-vara lot holders are listed, and they barely make the top six of table IV; but their possession of a great number of beach-lots compensates their otherwise modest investments in real estate. On the other hand, it is equally suggestive that even the most prominent short-term speculators and land grant jugglers, such as John C.

TABLE IV
Biggest Lot Owners, March, 1848.

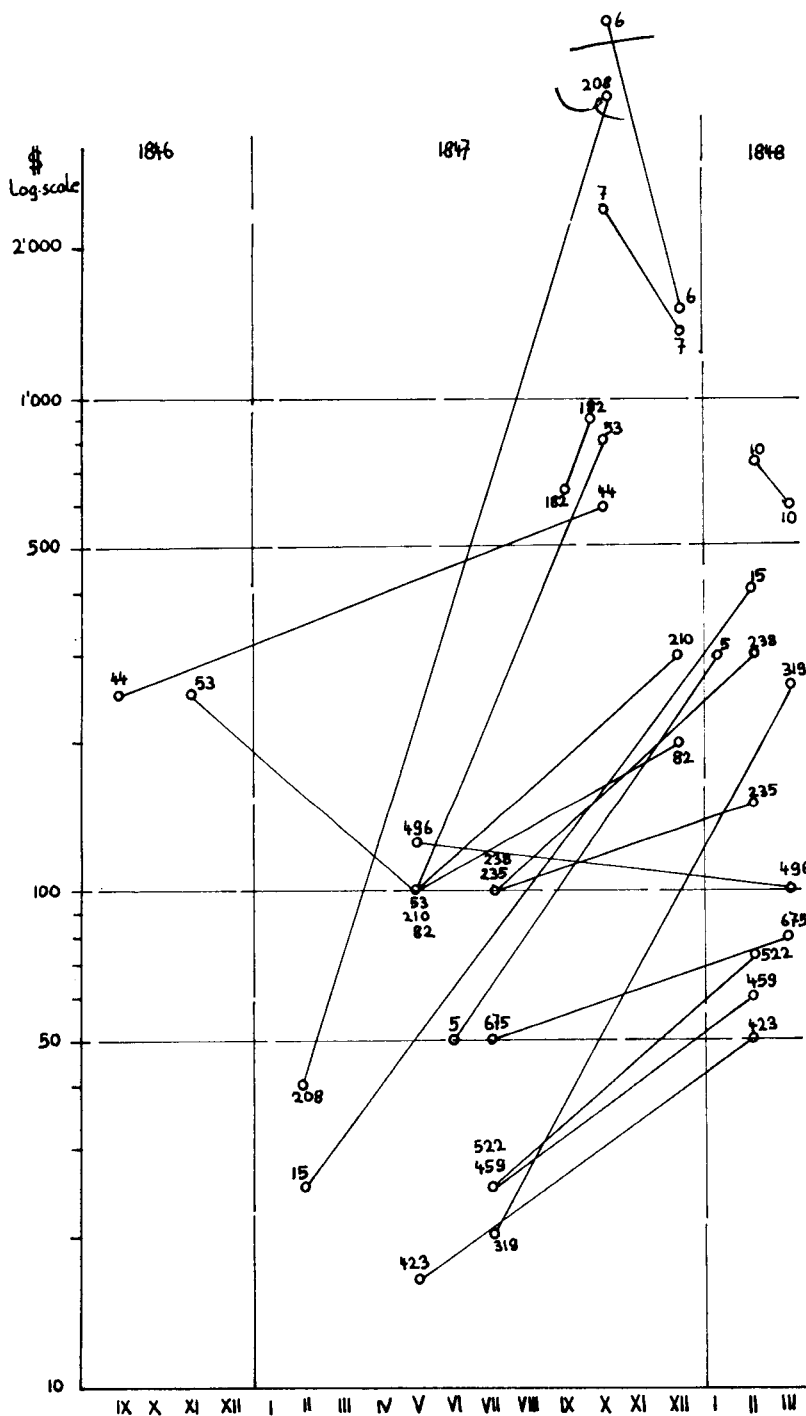
NAME	CATEGORY OF LOTS			TOTAL	IN PER CENT OF ALL LOTS GRANTED (844)
	50V.	WATER	100V.		
James Lick	48	15	—	63	7.46
Elbert Jones	32	19	—	51	6.04
Wm. Leidesdorff	11	30	—	41	4.86
Warner & Folsom	12	21	4	37	4.38
Mellus & Howard	2	31	3	36	4.27
B. Buckelew	20	4	—	24	2.84
Total	125	120	7	252	29.85

Source: Book A of Spanish Records; Miscellaneous Transfer Deeds, Book B 'O.K.'; Transfers of Deeds A; Book B of Transfer Deeds, (MSS in San Francisco County Archives); Wheeler, *Land Titles*, schedules A, D, F.

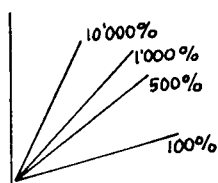
Buchanan, did not enter the race for water-lots. Their basic business was, apparently, to profit from the difference between the fees they paid for their grants and the current prices of lots resold on the market. As the beach-lots were not granted for a fixed price or fee but sold at auction (that is to say at market prices), their business methods did not work here. If we define speculation as "acting today in anticipation of a future development" these land grant jugglers were, strictly speaking, not speculators at all. Their methods were effective under very special and very narrowly defined circumstances only. John C. Buchanan's prominence in the real estate business is thus explained by his position as the *alcalde's* clerk. Similarly the *alcalde*, George Hyde, carried on a petty business, granting lots to himself and selling them at current market prices to persons turning up in his office.

The true speculator, on the other hand, was planning far ahead, his basic assumption being that real estate in Yerba Buena would grow in value. The soundness of this speculation reveals itself even within the short period of twenty months to which this paper is restricted. To illustrate: in July 1847, Benjamin Lippincott bought lot No. 238 from John C. Buchanan for the sum of \$100, and in February, 1848, Lippincott resold this same lot to James Lick for \$300.¹⁸ This represented a gain of 200% within seven months or an interest of more than 350% per annum. Similar data in addition to those furnished here will be gathered from table V. Turning to this table the reader will realize that quite a number of lots experienced an increase in value considerably more spectacular than the example chosen above; lot No. 208, for instance, was resold at an advance of more than 10,000% per annum.

Prices of 50v.-Lots, Sept. 1846-March 1848

TABLE
V

Comparative scale



Improvements of
100% } within
500% } one year
1000% }
10000% }
correspond to the
above angles

SOURCE:

Book A of Spanish
Records; Transfers of
Deeds A; Book B of
Transfer Deeds, (MSS
in San Francisco Coun-
ty Archives).

The first price of the lots listed in table V is in every case higher than the original granting fee of \$12.50. This is important; it means that only lots changing hands for the second time at least are being taken account. To include lots changing hands for the first time would clearly falsify the picture of the market situation. The increment value would in such cases have to be based on the granting fees and these, as explained above, did not reflect and were not influenced by the free market.

Table V, yielding the difference of price levels in function of time, is complemented by table VI, which lists the differences of price levels according to the geographical situation of the lots at a given time (February/March, 1848). The old town center around the *plaza*, now Portsmouth Square, was confirmed by the Yankee land speculator in hard cash. In this section of town, lots fetched prices ranging between \$1,000 and \$2,500. Here the prominent trading firms of Mellus & Howard, William H. Davis, and others had established themselves. In Vioget's tavern and the more fashionable City Hotel of William Leidesdorff the local notables gathered for a spot of whiskey or a round of billiards and, of course, these were also the places where they would learn and exchange the latest news. The *alcalde* had his office on the *plaza*, and so had the town surveyor and many other persons of rank. Here the first wharf reaching out into the bay was being constructed.¹⁹ Land in this part of town was so much sought after and consequently grew so scarce that only fractions of lots were traded. All figures in table VI are nevertheless based upon the unit of undivided lots so as to make them comparable with one another. The value of the lot on the corner of Pacific and Montgomery Streets, listed at \$2,500, has accordingly been computed by multiplying by five the actual selling price of \$500 for one fifth of the lot. The same procedure was used in table V whenever the necessity arose. Water-lots are listed on the basis of undivided lots as well. But it has to be kept in mind that the surface of beach-lots amounted to no more than one third of the surface of 50-vara lots: their prices as put down in table VI have therefore to be multiplied by three if prices for water-lots are to be compared with those for ordinary town-lots.

Real estate values decreased rapidly outside the immediate center of town. Two blocks to the north of the *plaza* lots were traded for about one third of the top prices paid in the center; three blocks off the center of town prices dropped to about one eighth or one tenth. Still farther away from the *plaza* the lots sold for sums ranging between \$100 and \$200, always excepting the lots situated in the immediate neighborhood of the shore; those fetched high prices even when they were relatively far off the center. Lots situated beyond the section of town shown in table VI generally sold for some \$50 or \$70. Prices for water-lots seem to follow a similar pattern: the farther away from the *plaza*, the less expensive they

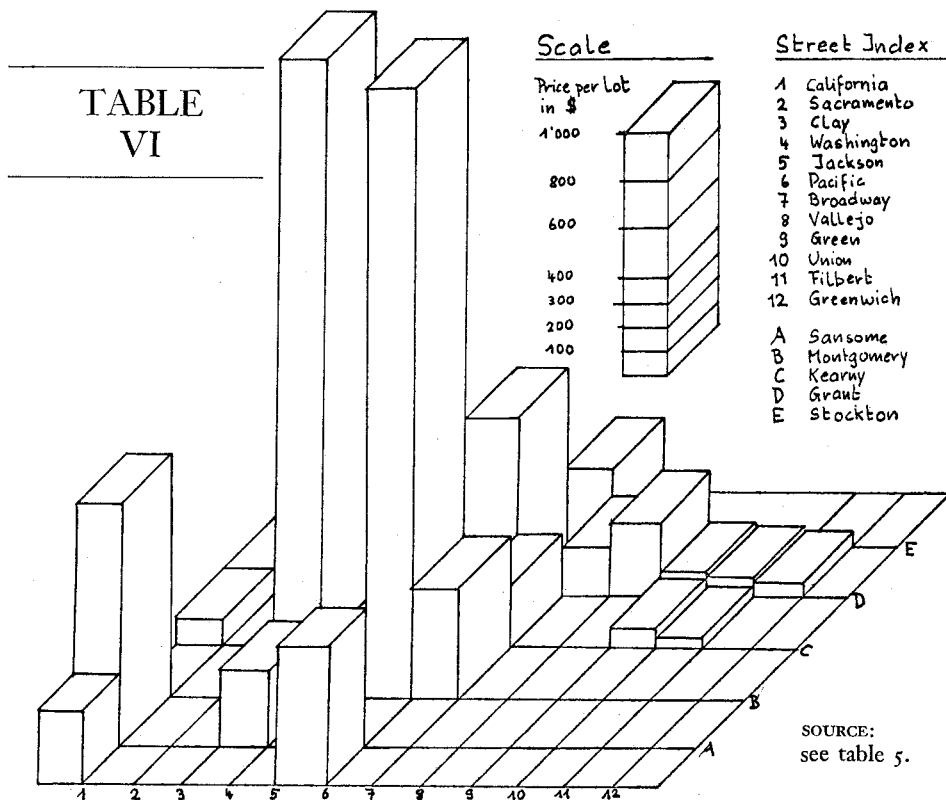
were. Here, however, prices were not determined by their distance from the central area alone but also by their proximity to the shore. Water-lots near the shore were considered more valuable; they could, with comparatively little trouble, be filled up with earth and thus be put to use.

On the relatively small and ever-changing market, prices depended to a great extent on the ability of the seller and the know-how of the buyer. An interesting case in point is that of two adjoining lots situated on Greenwich Street between Taylor and Mason Streets. One of them sold for \$50 and the other for \$100. Jasper O'Farrell was involved in both transfers, and both were executed in March, 1848. He bought the \$50 lot from a certain James Black and sold at the same time the other one for \$100 to James Lick.²⁰ James Black was living in San Rafael, whereas James Lick had the reputation of being the shrewdest of all land speculators around town. We may thus safely conclude the prevailing price for real estate in that part of town to be \$100 and that James Black was the loser in the deal. The fact that prices largely depended upon the cleverness of the speculator is once again illustrated in table V, lot No. 53. In November 1846 it was valued at \$250. James Watmough had bought it from William Leidesdorff and had to dispose of it, possibly because of illiquidity, at a serious loss. Roger Price, to whom the lot was transferred at a price of \$100, was more fortunate—or rather more experienced in business matters. In October, 1847, he sold half of the lot for \$410 to William Pettet.²¹ Similarly, the few losses occurring in the sale of lots and showing in table V are all to be attributed to the inexperience of the sellers and not to any slack in the real estate business.

The soaring prices for real estate evident from tables V and VI reflect the massive and ever-increasing demand for lots; they do not, however, explain the underlying reasons for this trend. While the population of California doubled²² during the span of time in question, Yerba Buena's population grew at a much faster rate than the California average. Expressed in figures: it multiplied by five whereas the state's population as a whole merely multiplied by two (see table II).

It is easy to see why the immigrants favoured Yerba Buena. The commercial center of Northern California was the place to be, not only for importers and exporters of goods, for retailers, and for a host of other people connected with trade, but also for the craftsmen who had to market the products they manufactured. They in turn created new demands for foodstuff, clothing, building, etc., so that layer upon layer of related professions was added to the original nucleus. Thus took shape the structure of a mercantile society that, because of the interdependence of the different branches of trade, needed to live in close geographical connection. These urban agglomerations were the fields of action for the land speculators.

Value of Real-Estate, March 1848

TABLE
VI

Only when the demand for land is focused on a limited territory, do supply and demand get into an economically interesting relation.

In California this socio-economic structure was new and essentially American. The Spanish-Mexican *ranchos* were not dependent upon each other. Each of these agricultural production units formed a closed circuit of production and consumption. Mexican *ranchos*, therefore, were not restricted to any special area except, naturally, that the soil had to be fertile. Hence they were scattered all along the coast. There existed, to be sure, in Spanish and Mexican California a few settlements which would colloquially be called towns. These *pueblos* were not market places but self-sufficient agricultural production centers on a co-operative basis. As a matter of fact, they were a remainder of the original Spanish colonial policy which for obvious reasons had deemed it necessary to concentrate its sparse available forces on certain places and had therefore been extremely reticent in allowing colonists to settle separately and independently from each other.²³ As the *pueblos* were instituted by the political authorities for political and military reasons, the land question, too, was a political matter,

regulated not according to economic but to strictly political needs. Not before towns and cities became the central points of a market oriented economic system were the basic prerequisites for land speculation fulfilled. And this economic system was introduced into California by the Americans; consequently the land speculator became by necessity a typically American figure and may well be regarded as the herald of new times.

It has been mentioned above that, by virtue of its ethnic structure and its economic concept, Yerba Buena was an Anglo-American settlement even in Mexican times. But it has also been pointed out that here, too, land speculation became attractive only after the American conquest. The reason for this is obvious. In Mexican times the new economic system was quite insignificant in comparison to the number of *ranchos* and other agricultural production units based on self-sufficiency; it could therefore not possibly attract enough people who would, in the neighborhood of the port, have created a population density that would have made land speculation interesting. But there is a further factor to be taken into consideration. For all political observers it had been evident for some time that sooner or later California must become part of the United States, and the American merchants in California were looking forward to this event with eager expectation. Why then did they not get hold of real estate in anticipation of the American conquest? The answer to this is, plainly and simply, that—with very few exceptions—they were not interested in this kind of business, neither before nor after 1846. It is significant that none of the early businessmen of Yerba Buena appears on the list of the most important lot owners (table IV). In vain do we look for William H. Davis, Jean-Jacques Vioget, Jacob P. Leese, and others, who all belonged to the “high society” of Mexican Yerba Buena. Restless adventurers most of them, they had come to California without a penny in their pockets, had adjusted to the easy-going life of the Mexican province, but had still managed to make a few dollars here and there; the one-eyed kings among the blind. James Lick, on the other hand, who heads table IV, did not set foot on Californian soil until January, 1848, when he arrived with the firm intention of investing in real estate the small fortune he had amassed in other parts of the world. By the end of March of the same year he owned 7.46% of all the lots in town. Another land speculator, William S. Clark, summed up his views on business affairs as follows: “When I resolved to go to California and locate on the Bay of San Francisco I lost at least six months’ time and sacrificed considerable in closing up my business affairs; I was six months on the road and six months here before realizing anything; there was 18 months of the best part of my life gone. I had better never have started for California if I did not avail myself of every opportunity that presented itself to make up for the lost time and compensate for the hardships endured in making the trip.” Business then, and business alone, was his motive when he emigrated to

California. In plain contrast to this attitude the pioneers arriving before 1846 had chosen this Mexican province for their home because they liked to live here. They had identified themselves with the Mexican way of life to the extent of calling the newcomers whose rapid pace they were unable to keep up with by the strongest invective they had at hand: damned Yankees.

Many have wondered why one of the most prominent pioneers, John A. Sutter, could lose his empire in the Sacramento Valley. Many a subtle and even hair-splitting argument has been advanced, but it has hardly ever been taken into consideration that Sutter's fate was no exception, that on the contrary he shared it with most of his fellow pioneers. It would be an interesting but difficult and altogether different task to try and explain why—firmly rooted in California business life as they were—they succumbed to the flood of newcomers. Suffice it here to say that the land speculator was not only the herald of the new American economy but at the same time the exponent of a new generation of pioneers who were going to lead California from its Golden Age to its Age of Gold.

After the changing of the flag, towns began to sprout everywhere. The act of founding a town was not necessarily dictated by economic need but would often depend on the initiative of some land speculator who hoped to attract enough people to make his scheme work. But the future development of a new town, and even its bare survival, depended on whether it was of use to the regional or national economy. Wherever two new towns were laid out in close proximity to one another it was a matter of cutthroat competition until one of them got the upper hand and absorbed the vital energies still left in the other. Thus Sacramento has become the capital of California whereas Sutterville, founded at about the same time, has completely disappeared, although we might do it the honor of calling it a kind of suburb of the former.

For some time the new town of Francisca was challenging the position of Yerba Buena. The town's name was allegedly chosen in honor of the wife of General Vallejo on whose land the settlement was laid out. The initiator of the idea was—once again—a Yankee, Robert G. Semple, and Thos. O. Larkin, former United States consul in California, had a hand in it as well. By June, 1847, the town was laid out, the first house was erected in August, and by March, 1848, some 200 lots were sold.²⁴ Francisca was intended to become the central port of San Francisco Bay and thus the direct rival of Yerba Buena. Francisca was in a position to advance powerful arguments: it was situated at the head of ship navigation and unlike Yerba Buena, which was cut off from the rest of the country, Francisca was centrally situated, halfway between the Golden Gate and the fertile Central Valley. A local newspaper summed up the situation in the following words: "Francisca at the head of the shipping must become more important than Yerba Buena, as Baltimore has become more important than Norfolk."²⁵ Landowners in

Yerba Buena grew alarmed and induced the authorities of the town to change the name of Yerba Buena into San Francisco, thus linking the still unknown town with the name of the world-renowned Bay of San Francisco. As in Mexican times Yerba Buena had been part of the *presidio* and *pueblo de San Francisco de Asís*, the name was not unfamiliar and therefore readily accepted. It thus happened that Francisca, whose founders had also hoped for the name of the town to be associated with "Bay of San Francisco," was left out in the cold and had to change its name into Benicia so as to evade confusion.²⁶

If we are to believe Bancroft, this cunning scheme of the land speculators of Yerba Buena—or rather San Francisco—thwarted all hopes of Francisca/Benicia from the very start. Whether this be true or not, it is self-evident that the landowners of San Francisco fought with every means to keep their town—and their prices—high. Hubert H. Bancroft, shivering in the "cold, bleak, circumscribed, sand-blown and fog-soaked city of San Francisco" instead of being able to live comfortably in the sunny climate of Benicia, bitterly resented their victory: "And for it let the names of those who thwarted the purposes of better men be anathemized. I regard it as a base act, beside which ordinary infamy were tame, an act imposing endless expense, inconvenience, discomfort, and disease upon millions of men for probably thousands of years, that two or three persons happening to possess the power should for petty and personal motives have so treated California, her present generation and her posterity."²⁷ Bancroft's furious statement that the location of San Francisco was "about as ill-chosen as possible" may be true. But it is also true, and from an historical point of view much more relevant, that San Francisco was, despite its shortcomings, more vigorous than its rival.

The fact that success or failure of a new town was not determined by entirely rational motives was in fact the most serious problem for the speculator. When Semple sold his land in San Francisco and invested his money in Benicia he was backing the wrong horse. Even as shrewd an investor as Thomas O. Larkin, co-founder of Benicia, was mistaken in his speculations as to the future of the town.

It has here been demonstrated that the founding of new towns in general as well as land speculation in Yerba Buena in particular coincided with the American acquisition of California; it has furthermore been suggested that this coincidence was not accidental, that it was basically linked to a new economic concept which had been introduced by the Americans into this remote part of the world. In the transition period from subsistence to commercial agriculture towns began to develop, serving as trading centers for agricultural products. On this stage the land speculator, protagonist of a new drama, made his appearance. If this interpretation be true it will not only apply to San Francisco—or to California as a whole—but indeed to all

places where, in its westward course, the drive of American economy was confronted with a pleasant but inefficient pastoral society whose static economy, based on self-sufficiency, had to yield to the dynamism of "Yankee enterprise." If we concede that the success of the American westward expansion rested less on political or military than on economic superiority, then the land speculator rather than the stereotyped pioneer may well be regarded as a symbol of what is commonly called "Manifest Destiny."

NOTES

1. The most comprehensive work on the early development of San Francisco is Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, *The Beginnings of San Francisco from the Expeditions of 1774 to the City Charter of 1850* (2 vols.; San Francisco, 1912).

2. The real estate registers which, as far as I can see, have never been used extensively for historical research, although they contain a wealth of information, are to be found in the San Francisco County Archives.

3. William C. Jones, *Report on the Subject of Land Titles* (Washington, 1850), quotes in full the Mexican laws concerning land grants. An example of a deed for a ranch may be found in Spanish Records B, San Francisco County Archives, 1.

4. Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California* (7 vols.; San Francisco, 1884-1890), Appendix "Register of Pioneer Inhabitants."

5. Book A of Spanish Records, San Francisco County Archives, 249, 304; and Spanish Records B, San Francisco County Archives, 7, 10.

6. The *View of San Francisco in the Spring of 1847* (Bosqui Engraving Company, San Francisco, 1847), clearly shows that only a few lots were actually fenced in.

7. Alfred Wheeler, *Land Titles in San Francisco and the Laws affecting the same* (San Francisco, 1852), schedule A.

8. Deed of sale in Book A of Spanish Records, San Francisco County Archives, 358 ff. The original building costs may be gathered from Leese's account book, MS C-B 632, Bancroft Library.

9. Wheeler, *Land Titles*.

10. Eldredge, *Beginnings of San Francisco*, 504, reproduces Richardson's plan of Yerba Buena in 1835. There, a strip of land along the shore is marked: "Tierra plana pa. oficina del gobierno."

11. The O'Farrell survey of 1847 superseded the Bartlett map (1846) and the Hinckley map (1844) which were extensions of the original Vioget survey of 1839. These surveys are discussed in Thomas P. Burns, "Centennial of the City of San Francisco" (Typescript in the Bancroft Library).

12. Transfers of Deeds A, 95-100, 106, 107, 119, 129, 172, 173, 230; and Book B of Transfer Deeds, 96, 97, 158 (both in the San Francisco County Archives).

13. MS C-D 245:1, Bancroft Library, 9.

14. *California Star* (San Francisco), Oct. 16, 1847

15. Only after the most attractive lots in the center of town were in private hands was the grant system abandoned and further lots sold at public auction. At the first auction in March, 1848, the lots fetched an average price of \$22.50. *Californian* (San Francisco), March 8, 1848.

16. See note 10, and Vioget's map, MS c912:S19:1839, California State Library, Sacramento.

17. Wheeler, *Land Titles*, schedule F.

18. Transfers of Deeds A, 186, and Book B of Transfer Deeds, 18 (both San Francisco County Archives).

19. Edward C. Kemble, *Yerba Buena 1846* (San Francisco, 1935, first published in the *Sacramento Daily Union*, Aug. 26, Sept. 16, and Oct. 14, 1871), 8 ff.

20. One might allow for a slightly higher value of the lot situated in the corner, and, in fact, O'Farrell had bought this lot in May, 1847, from the same James Black for \$60 (instead of \$50). The better situation, however, does not justify an increase in value of 100 per cent over the adjoining lot. Book B of Transfer Deeds, San Francisco County Archives, 95, 96, 97, 107.

21. Transfers of Deeds, A, San Francisco County Archives, 23, 181, 238.

22. The non-Indian population of California amounted to about 7,500 in 1846 and to about 14,000 in 1848. Jessie Francis, "An Economic and Social History of Mexican California" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1936), 153-157.

23. Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa outlines the Spanish system of colonization in his famous *reglamento* of 1773. Quoted in English translation in Jones, *Report*, 51.

24. For the history of Francisca/Benicia see: Peter Th. Conmy, *Benicia, Intended Metropolis* (San Francisco, 1958), also Jacqueline McCart Woodruff, *Benicia, the Promise of California* (Vallejo, Calif., 1947).

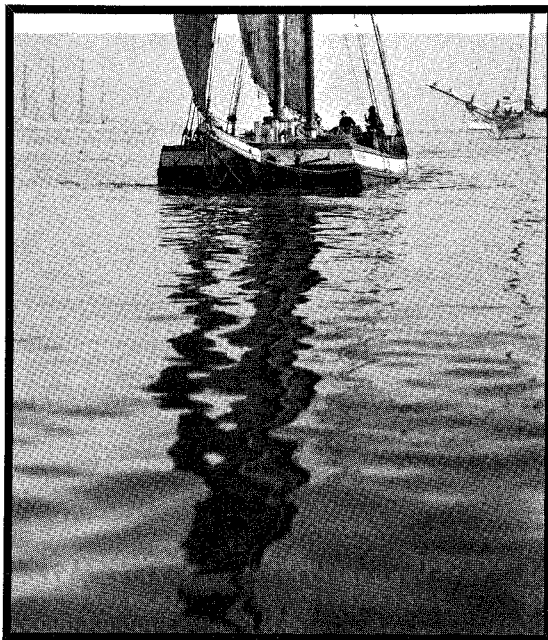
25. *Californian* (San Francisco), June 19, 1847.

26. Frank Soulé *et al.*, *The Annals of San Francisco* (New York, 1855), 193.

27. Hubert H. Bancroft, *California Pastoral* (San Francisco, 1888), 732 f.

The Square-toed Packets of San Francisco Bay

by Roger Olmsted



Among the more lovable and eccentric of San Francisco's contributions to the history of technology was the scow schooner. Like steam beer and the cable car, the scow was a minor civic institution. It was also one of the more unusual types of local sailing craft developed in the United States during the nineteenth century. Whether viewed in the light of nineteenth century prejudices or those of our own times, these unlikely craft do not suit preconceptions of what a boat should look like. The idea expressed in the design, as in the case of the cable car, seems too simple to work.

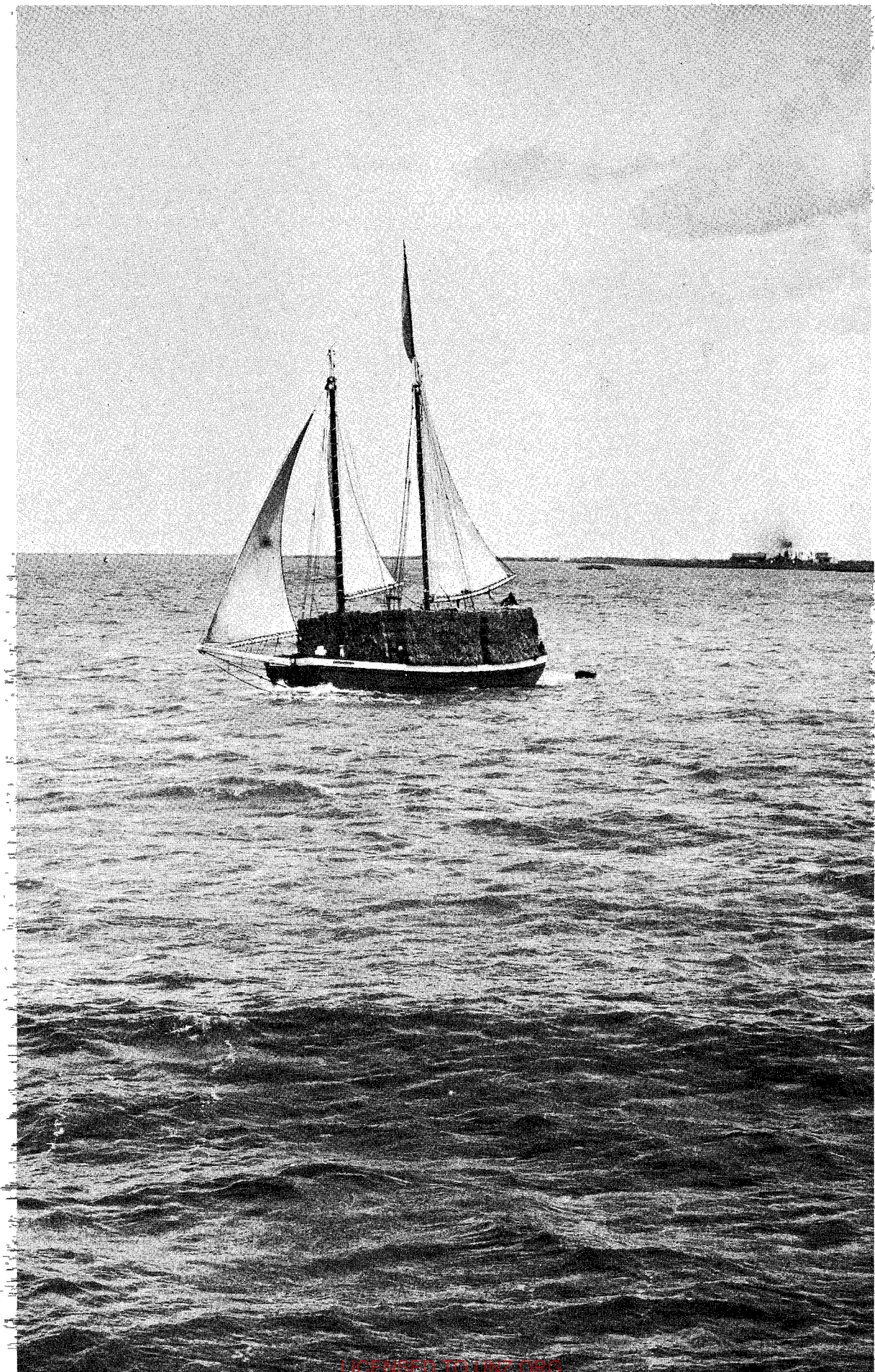
Yet the scow schooner was a thoroughly effective and practical vessel for the transport of bulk cargoes about San Francisco Bay and its tributaries. A fifty or

sixty ton scow could lift as much as a hundred tons of hay, brick, grain, sand, or lumber—to mention some of the more common goods that they carried. Their broad and unobstructed decks and great stability allowed stowage of most of their load topside, facilitating loading and unloading, while their flat bottoms allowed them to lie conveniently on the mud at low tide in the tiny estuaries among their ports of call. Scows were cheap to build and to operate. While these qualities are obvious enough, one would expect a craft of such description to go about at the end of a towline. But the scows went about by themselves, and the sight of a square sailboat beating smartly to windward, its helmsman standing on an upper rung of a long ladder in order to see over the haystack on deck, seemed almost as strange a hundred years ago as it would today.

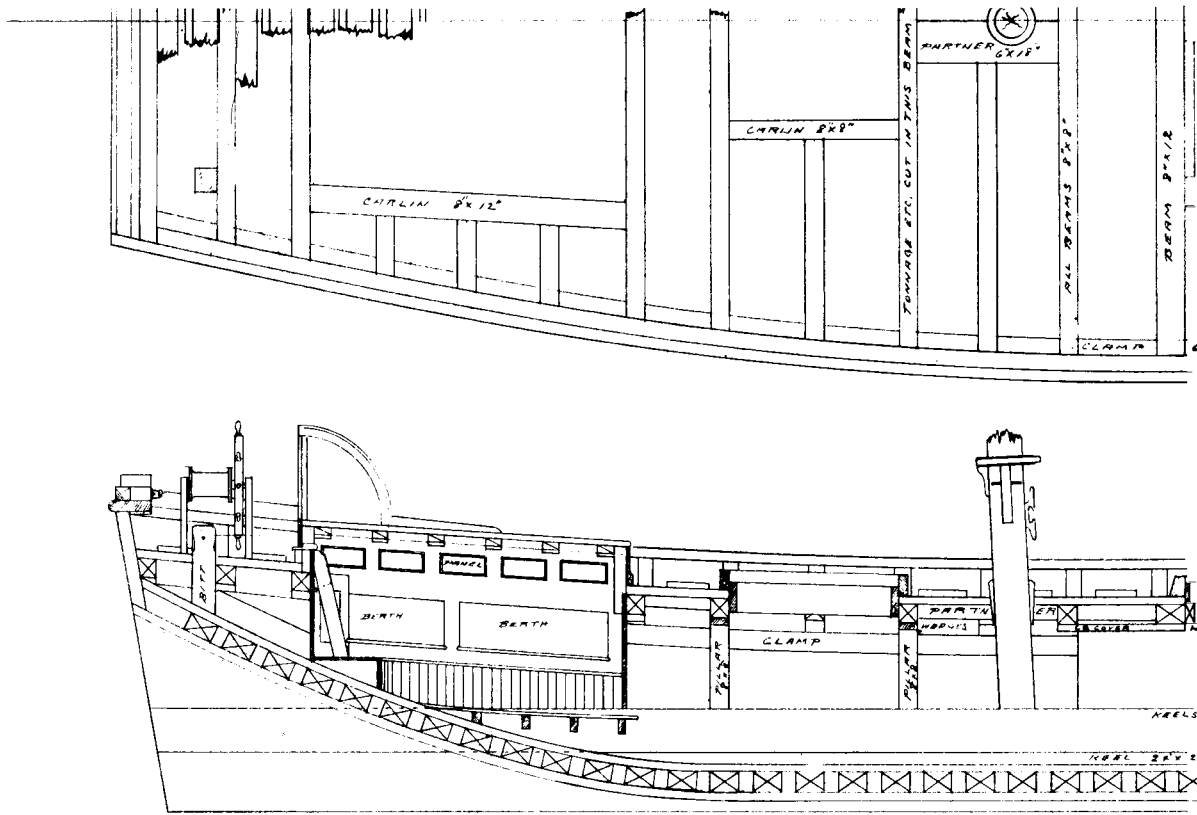
The scow schooners of San Francisco were handy sailing craft. When a seaman described a vessel as “handy,” he meant that it possessed a combination of desirable qualities: that it was easy to work, handled well under different conditions of wind and water, tacked to windward smartly, and maneuvered well in close quarters. Handiness implied respectable performance, but not necessarily speed. The scow type of hull is capable of development into a craft of great speed, but the San Francisco scow schooners were much too heavily built and the upward curve of their run (the after part of the bottom) was too abrupt and steep for them to be driven faster than a conventional hull of the same size. That the scows were reasonably fast was shown in the Fourth of July workboat regattas sponsored by the Master Mariners’ Benevolent Association during the 1870’s and ’80’s. The 110-foot scow sloop *P. M. Randall* was “the boat to beat” in the early races; in the 1870 regatta she placed first in the whole fleet, beating several smart (though smaller) schooners of conventional design. In the last of the Master Mariners’ regattas, in 1891, the 69-foot scow schooner *Nettie* lost only eight minutes in a three-hour race to the *Azalene*, a handsome schooner yacht nearly as long and carrying at least as much sail.

Admittedly the *Nettie* was fast for a scow. Her ends were carried out further and were nipped in more sharply than was usual. J. S. Nichols, builder of the *Nettie*, *Albertine*, and many other scows, thought narrow ends, together with placement of the greatest beam abaft of amidships, determined the best form of the scow. He was probably right. On the other hand, William Munder, the most prolific of the scow builders, thought that the greatest beam should be well forward, and the stern narrower than the bow, basing his theory upon the design of fast-swimming fish. His observation was of dubious utility, but his scows sailed well enough.

An important variation in the scow type involved construction as well as form. The usual San Francisco scow was planked fore-and-aft on the bottom, unlike scow types that appeared in other parts of the country. The fore-and-aft planking required frames and floors, as in the construction of conventional vessels. Because the vessel was framed, it was little trouble to give considerable

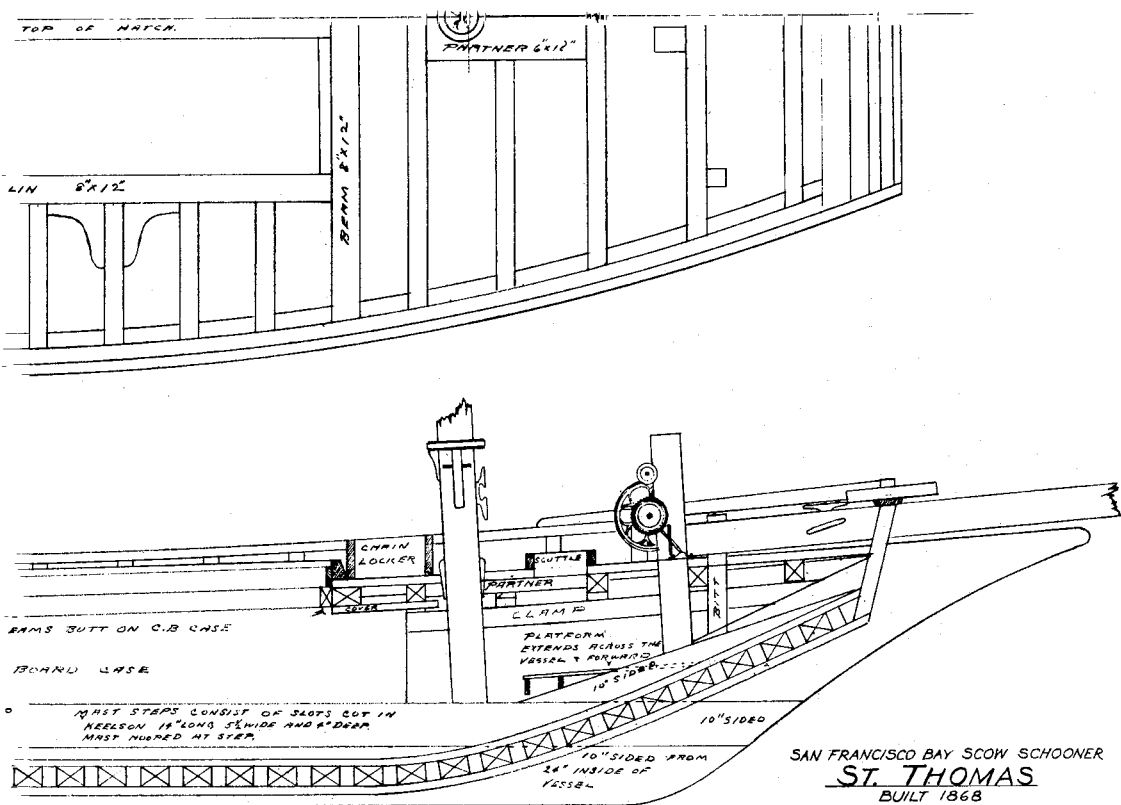


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shape to the sides; it was even possible to round the bilges and to terminate the forward sections with a sharp bow. A few such improved scows were built, though the extra cost of construction was not justified by enough improvement in performance to undermine the popularity of the plain scow. The design of a cross-planked scow, quite a few of which were built around San Francisco Bay, was a different matter. Cross-planking the bottom did away with the need for athwartship floor timbers, but required a heavy chine and thick, strong sides—indeed, the side planking in some of these scows was so thick that they were called “log built.” In order to realize all the economies of this simplified construction, builders found it necessary to make such scows rather square in plan.

The *Alma*, last surviving scow schooner, now preserved at the San Francisco Maritime State Historical Park, is one of these cross-planked craft. She is somewhat boxy in appearance, though by no means is she likely to be mistaken for a barge. Another variation on the same construction system appeared in the *Traveler*, built by a Mormon Elder named Jennings on Goat Island in 1864.



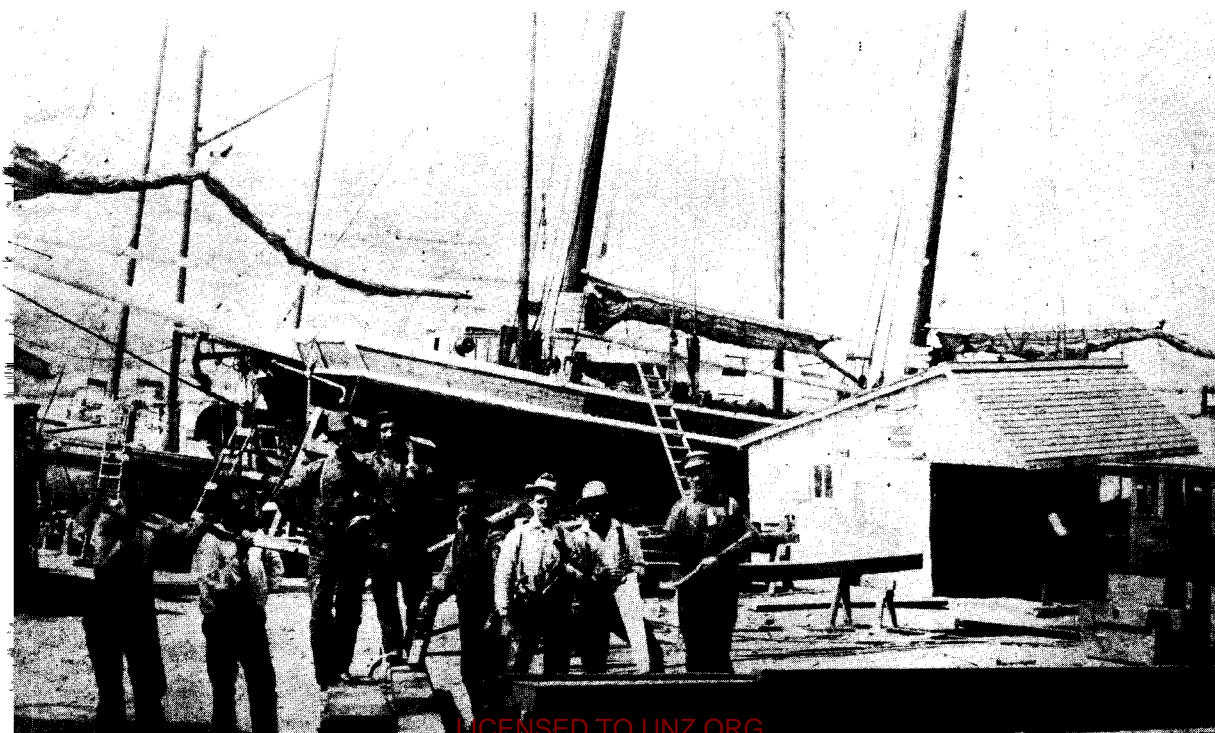
SAN FRANCISCO BAY SCOW SCHOONER
ST. THOMAS
 BUILT 1868
 No. 23506 - GROSS TONS 62.47 - NET TONS 59.36
 LENGTH 71.4 - BREADTH 25 - DEPTH 5.5
 PLANS PREPARED BY J. PORTER SHAW FROM MEASUREMENTS
 MADE ABOARD VESSEL WHEN ON MARINE RAILWAY
 J. PORTER SHAW COLLECTION,
 SAN FRANCISCO MARITIME MUSEUM

Jennings built his scow upside down, a technique considered rational enough in the construction of flat-bottomed craft on the East Coast, but one that was regarded as just another of Jennings' aberrations by scow schooner men. Though Jennings built at least three other scows, and his sons, Moses, John, Isaac, and David, were well known scow sailors in later years, his system was not much imitated, the San Francisco scows continuing to develop along entirely different lines from East Coast craft. The Jennings were also celebrated throughout the scow fleet as great Bible readers and dedicated teetotallers. Like the *Traveler*, they were not widely imitated. The *Traveler* outlasted not only the Jennings boys, but most of the other scow schooners on San Francisco Bay. She ran for 76 years before meeting an appropriately eccentric end: the termites got her in Petaluma.

The origin of the San Francisco scows is obscure. Howard Chapelle has found that sailing scows were used in New England in late colonial times, and that the type appeared in many forms and in many places during the nineteenth century. Yet the San Francisco scow seems to have been a purely local develop-



"Pop" Anderson in his Hunters Point boatyard (left). (Below) The scow builders of the Anderson yard pose before the scow schooner *Alpine* shortly after the turn of the century.



ment, possibly growing out of crude and hastily built craft of Gold Rush days. Sloops and schooners identified as "scows" in custom house records were built at San Francisco in 1850; as early as 1848 a builder at Santa Cruz suggestively christened one of his products *Bloody Box*. A close to definitive search of photographs and prints of Gold Rush years has failed to identify any craft that looks much like a scow schooner—but it is clear that by 1860 the type was popular and well developed.

In the first years of the twentieth century there were at least two hundred (possibly as many as four hundred) scow schooners on San Francisco Bay. Builders had turned out scows along the banks of nearly every unlikely creek around the Bay. But by far the largest number came out of the cluster of boatyards on the north side of Hunters Point, and by 1900 most of the building and repair activity had long been centered there, in the yards of Emil Munder, Fred Seimer, H. C. Thompson, and Hans Anderson. The rare old portrait on the opposite page is of "Pop" Anderson himself, who as a boy sailed in the famous clipper ship *David Crockett*, and whose boatyard at this writing still maintains the traditions of wooden shipbuilding at Hunters Point under the name of Anderson and Christofani. Much of the restoration work on the *Alma* was accomplished at the Anderson and Christofani yard. "Pop" Anderson's gang, armed with broadaxe, caulking mallet, top-mall, saw, and plane, poses in the other picture in front of the scow schooner *Alpine*. The bearded man in the center is Neal McAdam, a Nova Scotian who was legendary for his swift, sure work with the adze. Rarely seen today, the adze resembled a hoe, and was worked in much the same manner. Like the broadaxe, it was not intended to produce a smooth surface, but in skilled hands it could turn out a surprisingly finished piece of work. One of McAdam's employers recalled once asking Neal to replace a damaged piece of planking that had a curve and a sharp twist to it; McAdam quickly took a 12 x 14 timber down to a 2½-inch plank of the required shape with such a sure eye and steady hand that it fitted perfectly the first time it was tried in place. Not many of these old timers could surpass the work done in fine boatyards today—the arts of wooden boatbuilding are not lost by any means. But where there were once hundreds in the shipbuilding trades who were real craftsmen and thousands who were competent journeymen, there are now only dozens of craftsmen and hundreds of plain wood-butchers.

The disappearance of a healthy "middle class" of competent practitioners is equally apparent among seamen: a small core now maintains the traditions of seamanship in the face of general ineptitude. The men who sailed the San Francisco scows were from this lost middling group of competent seamen. A great percentage of them were of North European and especially Scandinavian origin, able seamen who had come 'round Cape Horn in foreign ships. As often as not, in those days, sailing ship captains not only encouraged the desertion of their crews when they hit port, but went so far as to make it tough on any but the most

favorable seaman who had the temerity to hang around for his pay. Not that many had much pay due: the seaman had generally been shipped on in debt to a boarding house keeper, a debt that had been discharged by the "blood money" (generally two months' advance on wages) paid by the skipper to the boarding house master in order to obtain his crew. A few necessary purchases from the ship's "slop chest" would constitute a second advance on wages. Naturally, at San Francisco another boarding house runner was prepared to advance booze, meals, and lodging. Even if the sailor were paid off, the paltry sum due him was just about enough for one bright evening on the Barbary Coast—then he had nothing to fall back upon but the generosity of his boarding house keeper.

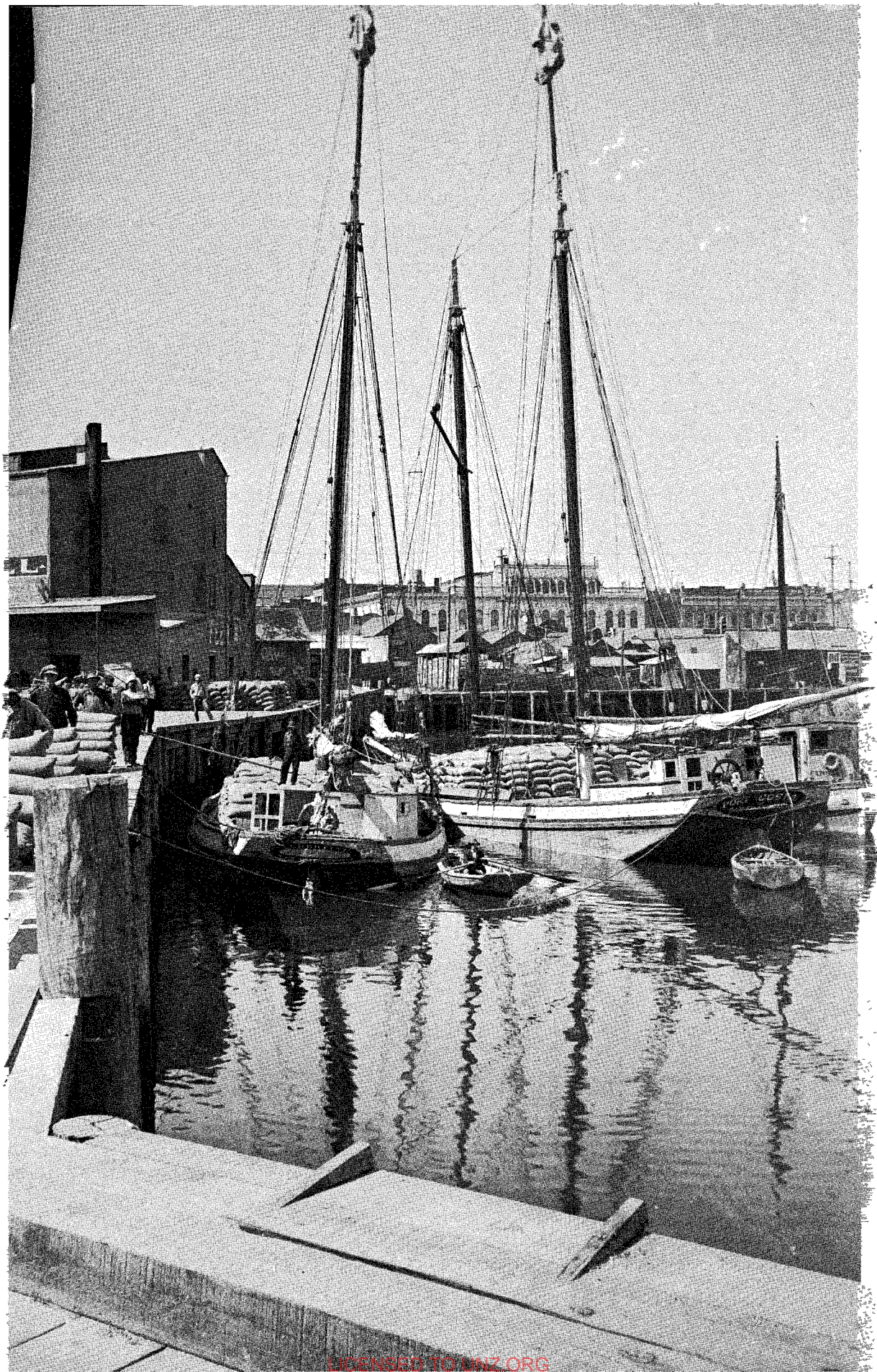
To a young Scandinavian just out of some hungry Limejuicer, life in the West Coasters looked very attractive. The twenty-five or thirty dollars a month a lumber schooner captain would pay him was an officer's salary in foreign square-riggers. And in a day when the 44-inch waist was still a genuinely impressive status symbol, the quantity of decent food provided seems to have delighted the deep-water sailor even more than the money. In exchange for this high living he had to work about twice as hard.

The scow schooners offered even more money, more food, and more work than the coasters. Three men, sometimes only two, constituted the captain, mate, cook, and crew of a scow. The captain as often as not owned the boat, in which case he might pay the crew a cut of the profits rather than a wage. If the skipper did not own the boat, he at least usually worked for a percentage. Nils Jessen, landing from a German ship in 1902, went to work in the *Florence Caduc*, one of a small fleet owned by Philip Caduc that usually carried coal to the brickyard on Galinas Creek and returned to San Francisco with brick. The owner took one-third, the captain and two-man crew split equally the other two-thirds. They had to buy their own food, but by making eight or nine trips a month between San Francisco and the brickyard they made up to \$145—fantastic pay for a seaman in those years. Another old timer in the scows, Hans Beck, who as a boy deserted from the British ship *Blackbrae* in San Francisco (and was best remembered among old scow sailors as the man who cut off his own leg with a pocketknife when it was crushed in the machinery of a scow he had rigged as an oyster shell dredger), recalled that in 1908 the salaried skipper of a scow he worked aboard was paid \$65 per month while he, as newest crewman, was paid \$40. A couple of years later, Beck was a captain, taking a big share of the profits of a scow that grossed \$1,000 a month carrying canned goods from Alviso to San Francisco.

Hans Beck had to keep his scow moving to earn that kind of money—and keep his crew moving. The hard work in the scows came in loading and unloading because the scow sailors, like the seamen in the coastal lumber schooners, were their own longshoremen. A voyage in a scow schooner would involve a great deal more heaving than sailing.

Take a typical scow schooner voyage. The crew might spend a day loading

The *Albertine* and *Port Costa* at Petaluma.

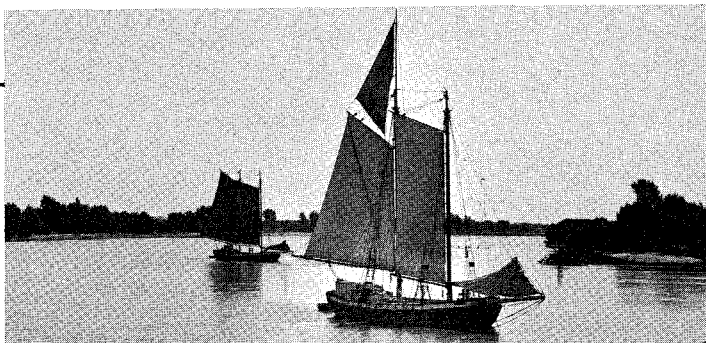


1600 sacks of grain at McNear's wharf at Petaluma, sail the next day down winding Petaluma Creek, beat across San Pablo Bay—and if the tide were running the wrong way in the channel into San Francisco Bay, round up and anchor. When the tide turned fair, they could beat on south to San Francisco in another three or four hours. Fickle winter breezes or occasional storms could make it a two-day trip, or more. But with good winds and tides, they might be snugged down at a San Francisco wharf by nightfall, the cook boiling up a merry stew that some sailor off Cape Horn would trade a month's wages for. A stroll across East Street to some favored hangout, a gallon or so of "steams," and it was time to turn in—so as to get an early start at those hundred-pound sacks in the morning. After unloading, they might move over to Meiggs' Wharf to load a thousand pieces of lumber for Cannon or Cavanaugh back in Petaluma. During much of the year they could count on a fair breeze to carry them to Petaluma Creek. Getting back up the Creek required a flood tide above Donahue Landing, for the channel narrowed and the twists in the creek carried the scows again and again into the teeth of the prevailing winds.

To make the last few miles up to town, the crew might break out some twenty-five-foot sticks and pole the heavy boat along fast enough to give steerage way. In the last stretch, where there were firm banks, two men would hop ashore and tow the schooner with a sling around their chests and a long line to the foremast-head. If it were summer time or after school hours, a few boys, eager for the chance to pick up dimes for pulling a scow schooner into town, might be waiting on the bank. Once alongside the lumber yard the crew would take advantage of the high tide to start unloading right away. As the tide ran out, the scow would take the bottom, lying over at an angle that made unloading difficult or impossible. Thus, the trade in Dave England's saloon might be influenced by the phases of the moon, though the heat of a summer afternoon would also bring in all but the most heroic scow men. With two days spent unloading the lumber, the round trip to San Francisco would represent on the average a good week's work.

This way of life ostensibly was done in by the internal combustion engine, though one should not overlook the demoralizing effect of changing times, symbolized by the wristwatch, the cigarette, and the Eighteenth Amendment. The order for the last sailing scow built at Hunters Point was placed with Emil Munder the day before the Earthquake of 1906. Already the old *Champion*—as her name implied a relic of the days of the Master Mariners' regattas—put-putted up and down the South Bay wreathed in the fumes of her new gasoline engines. Still, as late as 1914 a Petaluma newspaper could report that a motor scow "created a sensation" when she chugged up the creek with neither sail nor tow line to be seen. A bright new age, fatal to the scow schooners, followed very quickly. By 1920, there were only 64 scows left in the San Francisco Bay trades, over half of them motorized. Almost surprisingly, a handful of motor scows

operated right through the '20's and '30's. Surprisingly—because anything a motor scow could do better than a sailing scow, it could do better yet if one put wheels on it and turned it loose on the road.



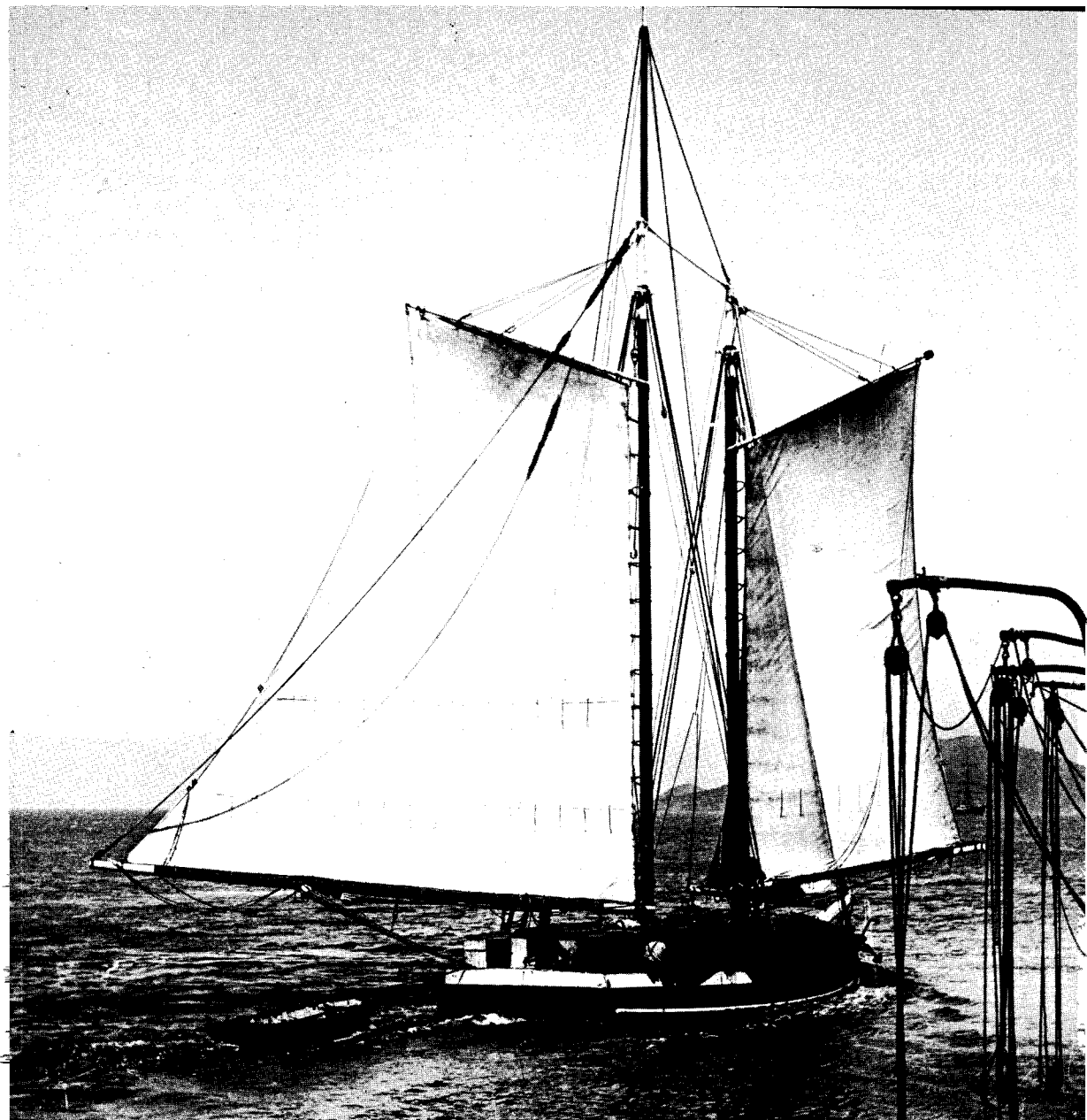
A Note on Sources

The unique types of vessels developed on the West Coast during the last half of the nineteenth century have received far less critical attention than have East Coast types. The San Francisco Maritime Museum has since its founding expended great energy toward correcting this imbalance. This article and photographic portfolio is a sketch based on research extending over the last twenty years by the author and by Karl Kortum, Director of the San Francisco Maritime Museum. As of this writing, the only extensive scholarly treatment of the scows is found in my unpublished thesis, "The Scow Schooners of San Francisco Bay" (University of Nevada, 1955), a copy of which is available in the Maritime Museum library.

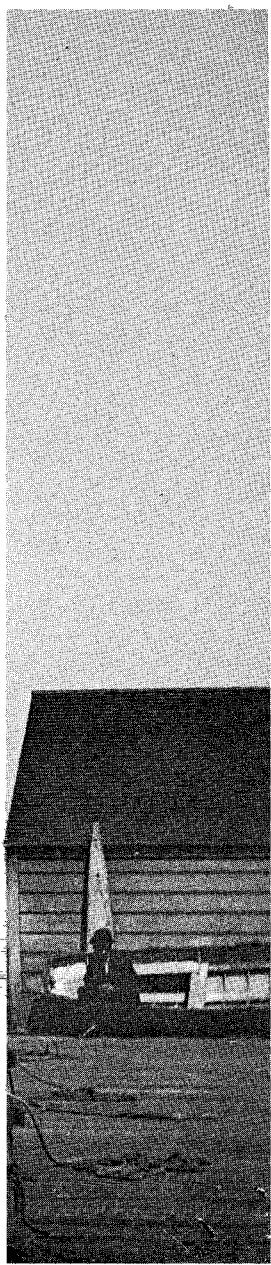
Nearly all of the important material on the history and nature of the scow schooner has been compiled from casual contemporary sources (such as newspapers and custom house documents) and from extensive interviews. Fortunately, many important interviews were conducted in the early 1950's, when quite a few men who were in their eighties could speak of working the San Francisco scows sixty-five years before. It would almost be impossible now to gather the information that they passed on to us. For example, a series of interviews with the important scow builder, Emil Munder, established the rationale of design and construction practices which had puzzled the eminent American maritime historian Howard Chapelle.

The only significant contemporary published work on the scow schooners is the note by Henry Hall in *Shipbuilding Industry in the United States* (see *Tenth Census of the United States*, Washington, D. C., 1884). Chapelle touches on the type in his *American Small Sailing Craft*, New York, 1951). Some solid information was published in the San Francisco Maritime Museum *Sea Letter* in December of 1967.

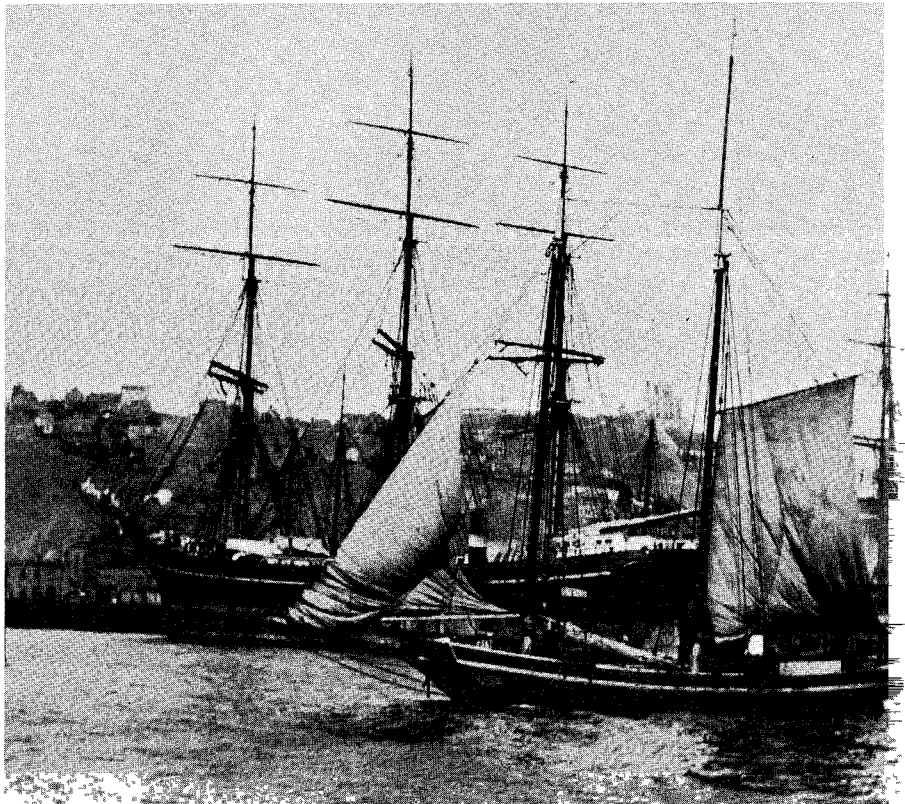
In the history of technology the photograph or drawing takes a large role, as it more explicitly defines objects and activities than can mere words. For this reason, I have chosen to use many photographs in sketching the history of the scow schooner. While the photographs originally came from many sources, all can now be found in the archives of the San Francisco Maritime Museum.

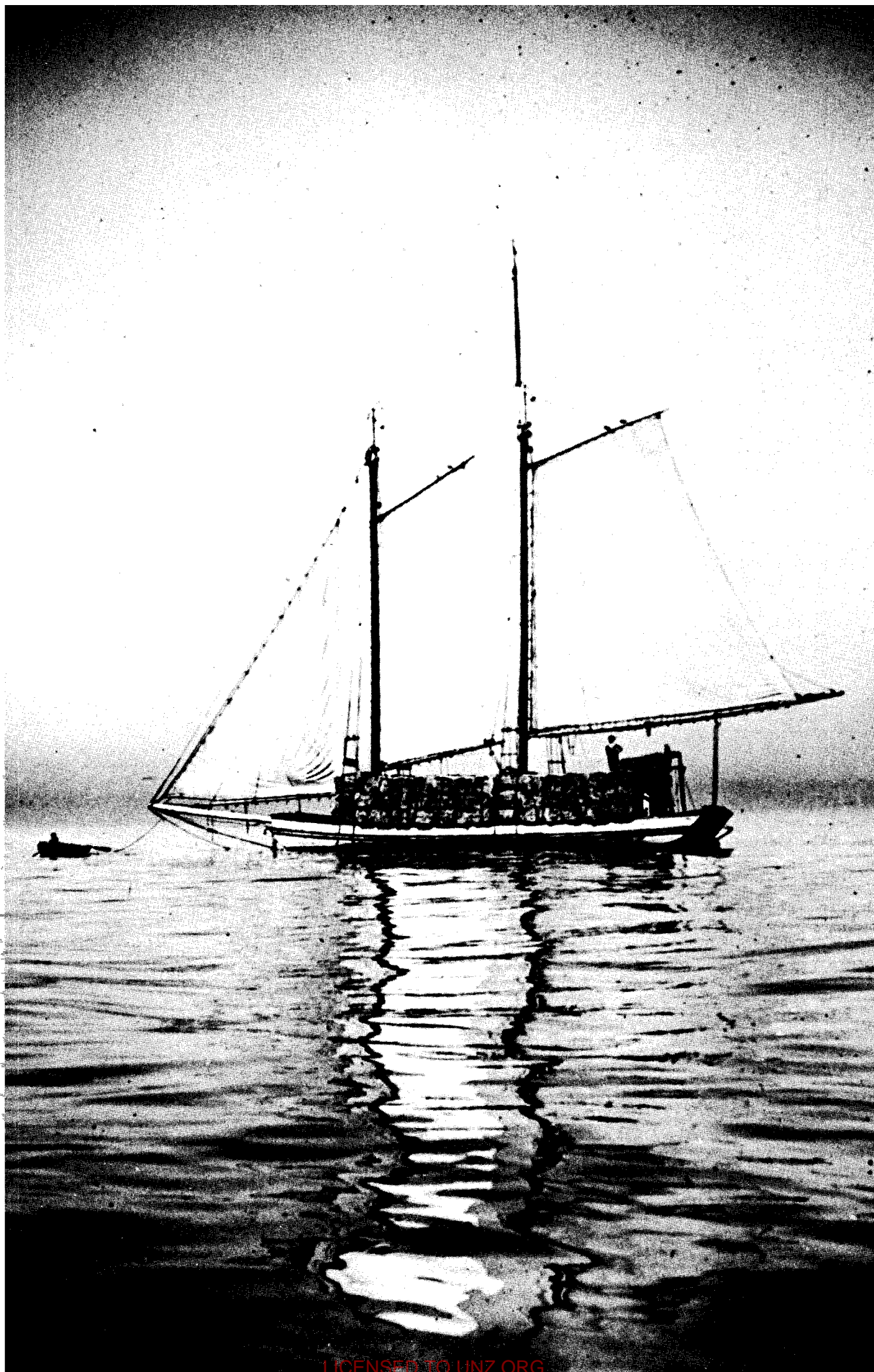


Wing and wing (above). . . . The scow schooner *Caroline*, her scuppers awash, sails from San Francisco with a load of lumber for some upriver port. There was a *Caroline* of about this size built in 1853. If this is the same schooner, then there was little difference between the vessels of the Gold Rush era and those of the 1890's.



Along the city front (below)... In the shadow of Telegraph Hill, a scow ghosts along toward her loading berth. At the wharf is a big Down-east ship which has reached San Francisco by way of Cape Horn. Both the Downeaster and the scow schooner were distinctive American contributions to the history of naval architecture.



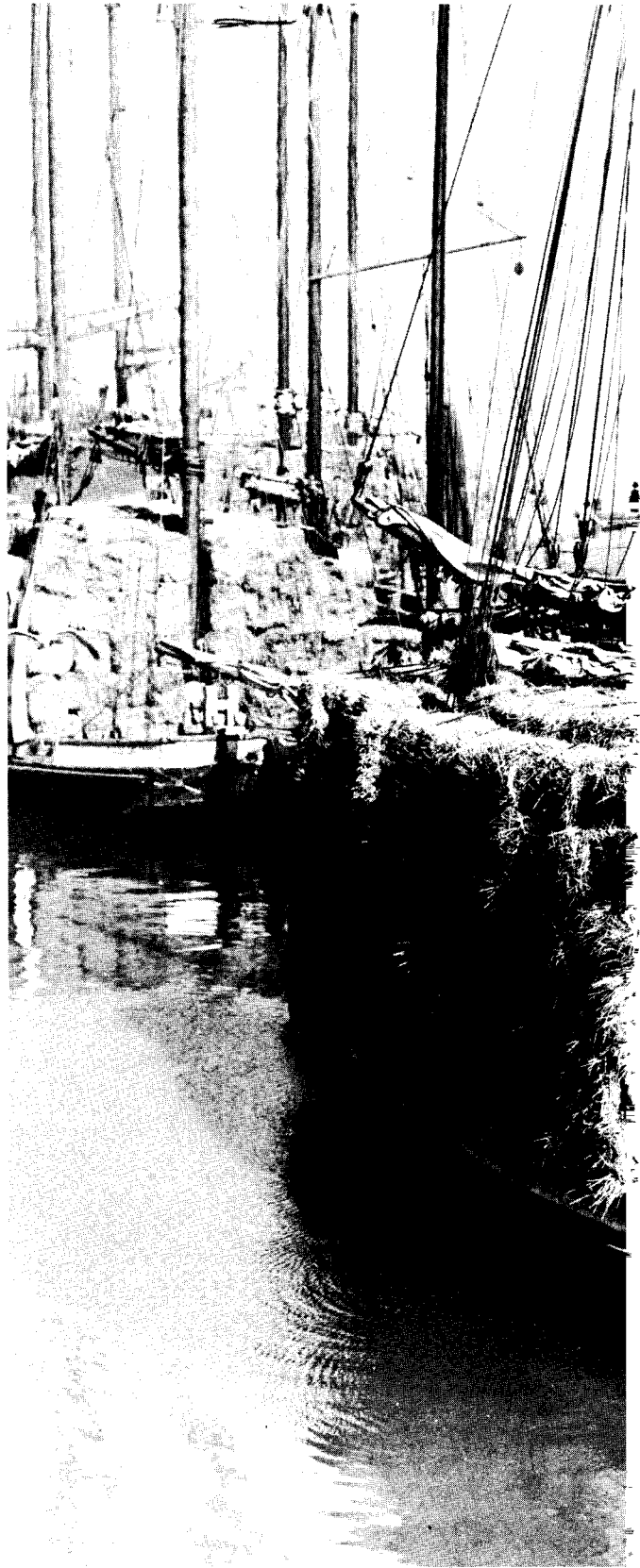


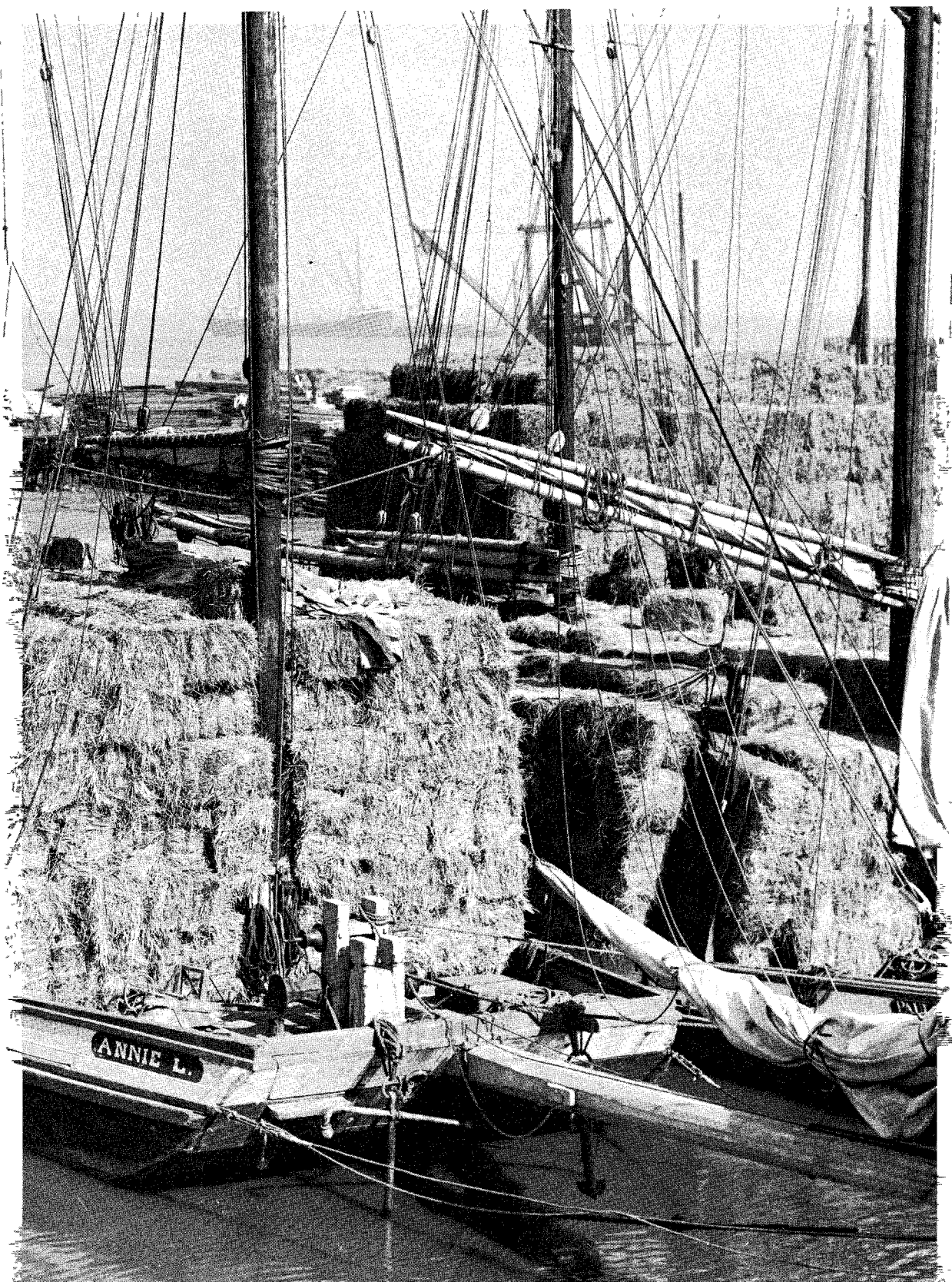
Reflections The scows were a favorite subject for both amateur and professional photographers. At the left a "Swedish towboat" (the yawl boat of the scow) pulls a hay scow that last few hundred feet up to the wharf. Looking closely you can see that the steering wheel of the scow has been raised eight or nine feet so that the helmsman (at this moment standing atop the load) can see over the hay.

Below is a glassy day in the Delta country with a white scow floating on its own reflection. A few scows were painted white and a few were barn red—but the traditional color scheme was bottle green with white bulwarks and a red sheer strake.



The hay wharf. . . . Hay turned the wheels of the nineteenth century, and hay was such a distinctive cargo of the San Francisco Bay scow schooners that they were often called hay scows, even though they carried many other types of cargo.

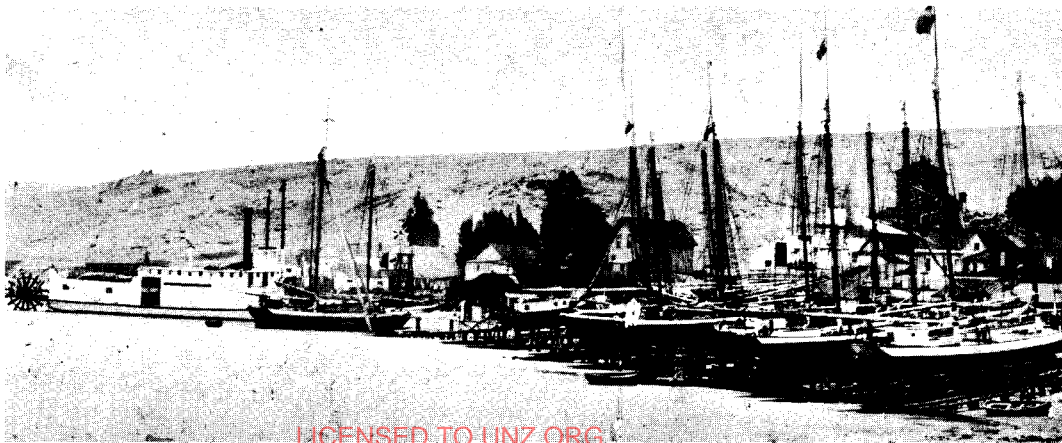






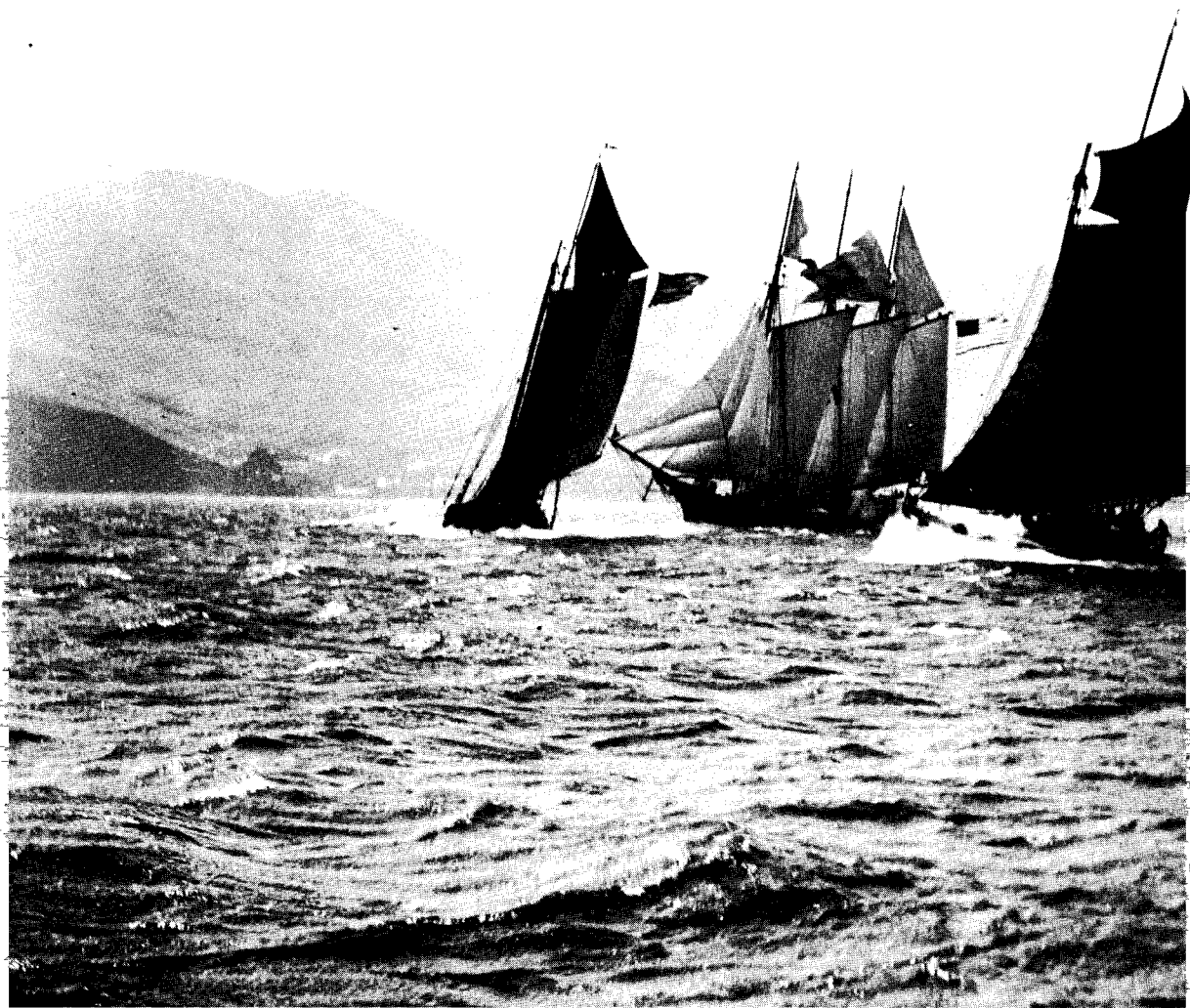
A launching party. . . . The *James F. McKenna* sails on her trial trip with her owners and builders and their families and friends.


Scows on the ways at the Hunters Point yards.



Gus Lawrence, scow schoonerman (below). . . . (From an interview on the bank of Whiskey Slough, 1956). "Six of us went over to the St. Louis Bar on Front Street—1908 this was. Right off this bark from Boston, with a little money in our pockets, and we had to get rid of it before we did anything else. We bought a whole quarter keg of beer, set it up in the middle of the table. Had it about finished when in comes this man in overalls. He looked like an old spittoon cleaner, and drunk as an owl he was. But he pulls out gold and buys drinks for the house. He wants nine sailors to go up the Sacramento and load hay and work his scows. We all six went—up to one of those big hay ranches. We're supposed to be heaving these 250-pound bales on board, and the old man who owns the ranch comes down and wants to know why we aren't working. 'No wine, no hay!' we tell him. He goes back and brings down wine. When we have one scow loaded, some of us sail with her. We have a barrel of wine on top of the hay, and it's night, so when we come down on the bridge at Rio Vista nobody's got wind enough to blow the horn. But the bridge tender sees us and opens up (not like at Courtland the time we took the bridge right out). Down off the end of Sherman Island the tide changes. Someone threw away the hook—didn't make the line fast, and she was gone. So we turn in anyway, everybody drunk, and we drift up on Sherman Island at high tide. Next morning the cook looks out and says, 'Fine wind, set the sails, boys.' Fine wind all right, but the man can't get her to steer. We're two miles up on the mud."



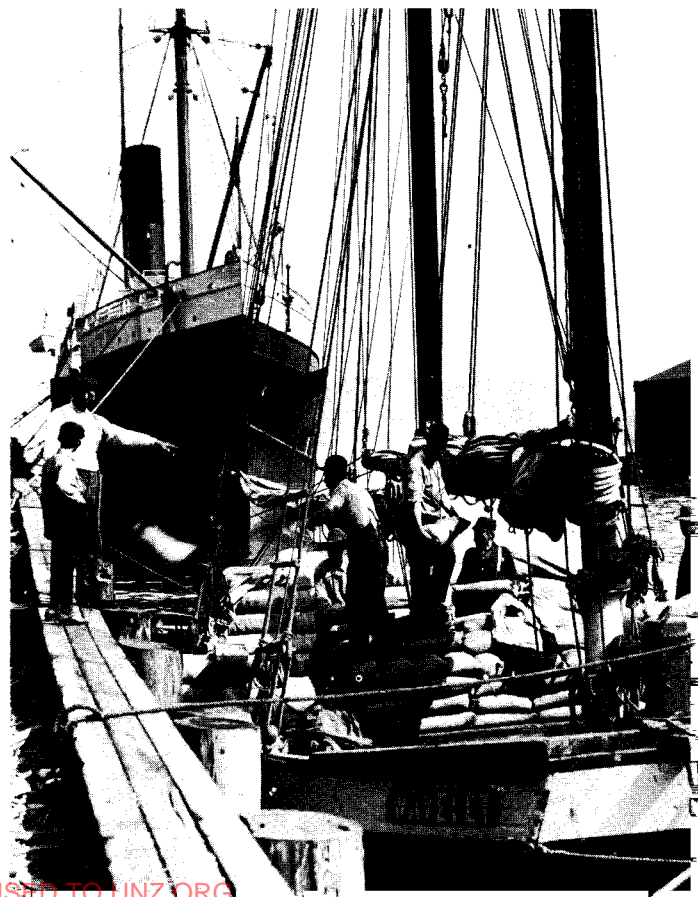
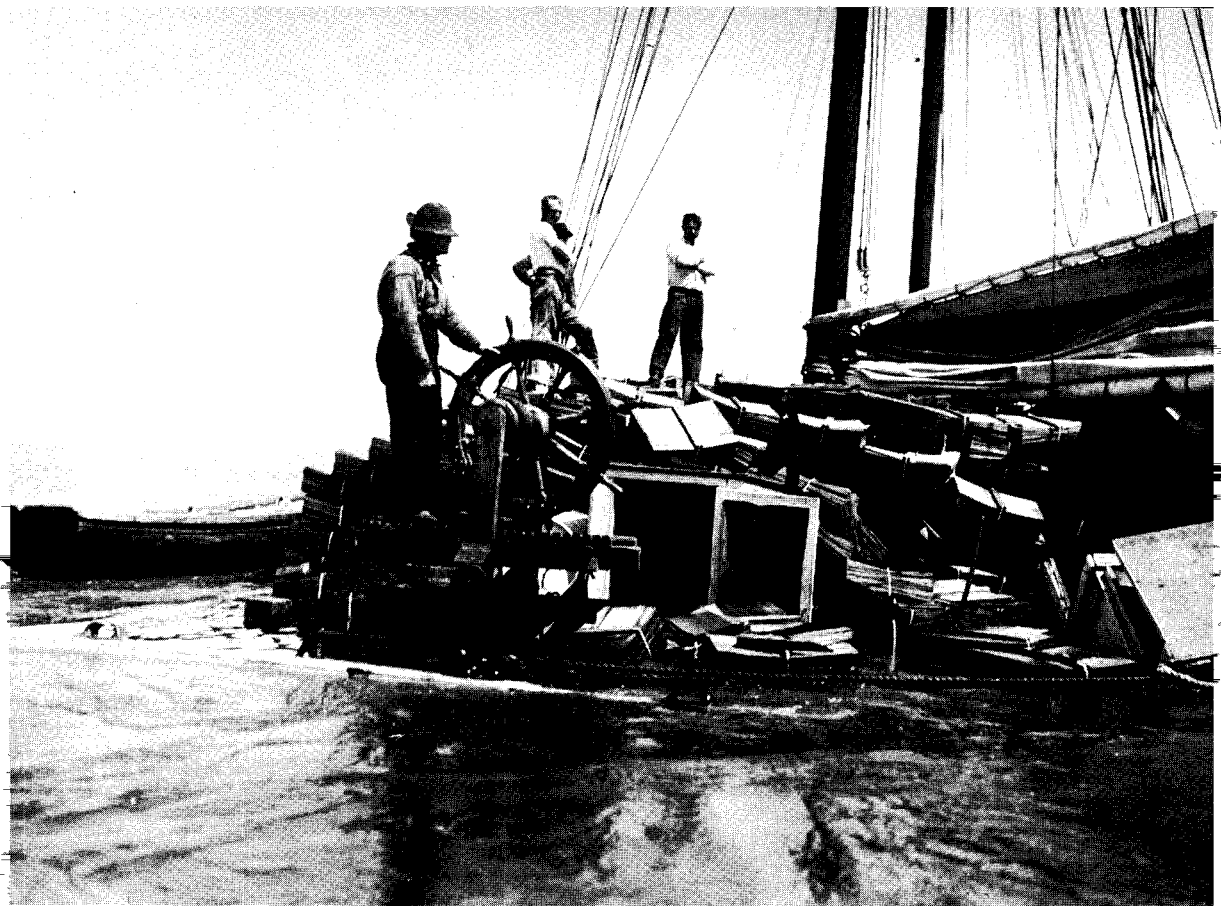




The Master Mariners' Regatta (left). . . . The scow sailor's big outing of the year was the Master Mariners' Regatta on the Fourth of July, when coastal and bay workboats competed for the coveted "Champion" banner of the Master Mariners' Benevolent Association. The races began in 1867 and were held annually through the '70's. The sport was revived in 1884 and '85 and again in 1891. The lively scene above was caught during the 1884 regatta as the three-masted lumber schooner *Occidental* and two scow schooners bore down on the Fort Point stakeboat. The fresh westerly sweeping through the Golden Gate has cost the three-master a foretopsail; one of the crew broke his wrist trying to muzzle the splitting canvas. Riding high and light and if possible setting a seldom-used fisherman topsail, the scows showed themselves smart sailors on regatta day.

A swig on the peak halliard (below). . . . One man could get a scow underweigh and sail it under most conditions. Afloat, home was the little after cabin; for a galley, many scow men added the box-like house that you see at the after end of the *Dreadnaught's* cabin trunk.

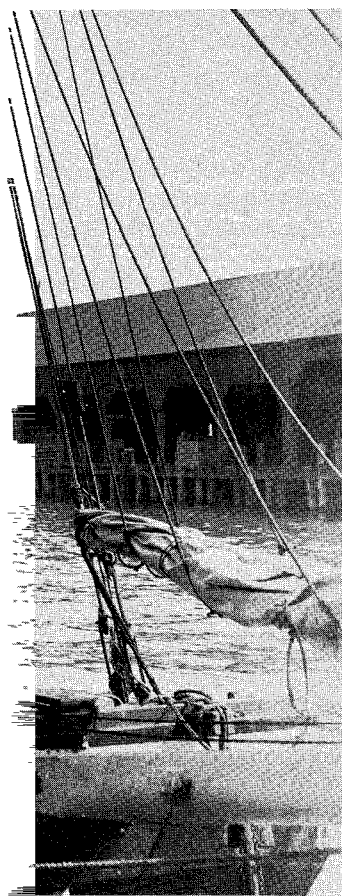






Awash in shingles (left). . . . A waterlogged scow was not unusual, and the *Robbie Hunter* ran for thirty years after this minor maritime disaster in 1905. Fire was a greater threat in the hay scows and in later motor scows. The view shows the movable steering gear quite clearly. The helmsman is standing on the "pulpit," a platform to which the steering wheel was attached. With a load of shingles, the wheel has been elevated only three or four feet; with a hay load, longer extenders would be used.

The gas scow (above). . . . Chugging up Petaluma Creek, the *Matilda* has declared independence of wind and tide. A few years after this picture was taken in the late 1930's, the *Matilda* was abandoned on an Alviso mudbank, a victim of economics.





With a dying breeze and
a setting sun, the heavily
laden *Annie Maria*
ghosts towards home
port at San Francisco.

John L. Shover

Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania and co-author of the recent book, Political Change in California: Critical Elections and Social Movements 1890-1966.

The California Progressives and the 1924 Campaign

CALIFORNIA PROGRESSIVISM REMAINED a viable political movement in the nineteen twenties. Its leadership was schism-torn, and powerful opposition elements had successfully challenged the nearly undisputed control the reformers had maintained since Hiram Johnson's election as Governor in 1910. Even in the days of its ascendancy, however, Progressivism had never encompassed a unified body of thought and had never been free of factionalism. Out of power and confronting a complex of new issues, Progressives found old ideological divisions and personal antagonisms assuming greater importance while new issues emerged. Nonetheless, on specific issues (particularly challenges to the achievements of the past decade) the leaders were able to unite as a strong, and sometimes successful, political coalition. While Progressivism had fallen upon evil days, the movement was still enough alive to generate the major political dissent of the twenties and maintain a strand of continuity that wove the principles of some of the Progressives into the new California politics that emerged in the depression period.¹

Four critical issues invited the attention and possible action of Progressives in 1924. First, could control of the Assembly and Senate be wrested from the conservative supporters of the economy-minded Governor, Friend W. Richardson, elected in 1922? Second, could the opposition of powerful utility interests to a comprehensive state financed water and hydro-electric plan be overcome by a direct appeal to the voters via the initiative? Third, should the California Progressives lend their support to the futile bid of their titular leader, Hiram Johnson, to win the Republican presidential nomination and restore Progressivism in Washington? Finally, with the failure of Johnson's bid, did principle demand a vote for the third party candidate, Robert M. La Follette, rather than President Coolidge?

Not all veteran Progressive leaders responded alike to these issues. While the campaigns for each of them were led by men of undisputed Progressive credentials, only a handful were unqualified in support of all four points.

Some of the most enthusiastic partisans for public power could not countenance the presidential candidacy of Johnson; many of those who actively campaigned for the Senator in the presidential primary nevertheless felt compelled to lend their support to Coolidge in November.

Progressivism in California had assumed this *ad hoc* character for two principal reasons. First, a series of personal and ideological rivalries had splintered the leadership. Second, control of the Republican party in the state and nation had passed to non-Progressives.

The first defection from the Progressive ranks had been the gradual withdrawal of leaders and voters in Southern California, an early stronghold of reform sentiment. Part of the reason was substantive. Southern leaders, touched by the prevailing open shop philosophy of Los Angeles County, were skeptical of the social legislation of the Johnson administration and alarmed at the friendship between the Governor and labor leaders in San Francisco.² More of the reason was the personality of Governor Hiram Johnson. Johnson had left the governorship in 1916 in bad temper, convinced that the choice of his successor, William D. Stephens, had been forced upon him by Southern California leaders as the price for their support of his Senatorial candidacy.³ Whatever the reason, prominent southern Progressives like E. T. Earl, Edward Dickson, and Marshall Stimson disappeared from the ranks, to appear in 1920 as supporters of Johnson's arch-enemy, Herbert Hoover, in the presidential primary. The once impressive majorities Johnson had piled up in the southern counties crumbled. After the 1924 primary Johnson wrote bitterly to one of his remaining southern confidants: "I am perfectly certain that I can be of real service north of the Tehachapi. I am very certain I can be of little service in Los Angeles. The tyranny there of Chandler⁴ passes belief, and until you people who live there devise some means of meeting him and his papers, the Dicksons, . . . the Better America Federation, and the like, we'll find our road in California extremely difficult. . . ."⁵

Johnson's irreconcilable stand against the League of Nations widened into a chasm between himself and some of his most prominent Progressive colleagues. Congressman William Kent, conservationist, friend of organized labor, and a prohibitionist, occupied a position to the left of Johnson in California, and the relationship between the two had been strained. When Kent, who endorsed the League, sought the Republican Senatorial nomination in 1920, Johnson lent his powerful support to Samuel Shortridge, a Stand-patter never suspected of any Progressive inclinations. Johnson's opposition was only partly responsible for Kent's defeat, but Kent never forgave Johnson. He remained an ardent Progressive, campaigning for the Water and Power Act and for La Follette in 1924, but he was an implacable political foe of Hiram Johnson.⁶

The estrangement of Johnson from one of his closest lieutenants, Chester

Rowell, was even more emotion-laden. Rowell had traditionally been a moderate among Progressives and as early as 1916 the labor press had criticized his fraternizing with Old Guard Republican leaders.⁷ As Johnson made his petulant departure from Sacramento to Washington he wrote Rowell: "Upon you, with my departure devolves the leadership of the altruistic, idealistic, progressive movement in California."⁸ The friendship abruptly terminated when Rowell announced his support for the League of Nations. "What a damn scrub he is," Johnson remarked of Rowell to his close friend, C. K. McClatchy, and noted that Rowell had backed Cox in 1920 and Moore⁹ in 1922 because of their support for the League, but in 1924 endorsed Coolidge who opposed the League.¹⁰ Rowell, for his part, complained of Johnson's insistence upon a "personal, feudal, or tribal loyalty" but noted that he still stood upon Johnson's record as governor; his sole dissent was with his international policies.¹¹

Could politicians in the nineteen twenties have swept under the carpet the divisive issue of Prohibition they doubtless would have done so. Hiram Johnson and most of the major Progressive leaders attempted to remain aloof, but among the Progressive legislators were ardent Prohibitionists, like Senator Herbert Jones of Santa Clara and Assemblyman Charles Cleary of Tulare county. Franklin Hichborn, the major chronicler of California Progressivism, was a leading publicist for the dry cause. By contrast, the San Francisco delegations in the Senate and Assembly, although they provided no major Progressive leaders, were a critical voting bloc usually lending support to reform legislation. Reflecting the city they represented, they were doggedly wet.¹²

Until 1916 dry leaders had supported Progressive causes. A 1919 A. F. of L. evaluation of the voting record of members of the legislature revealed that the two Senators with the worst labor record were wets and of the eleven Assemblymen at the bottom of the A. F. of L. list, seven were wet, four dry.¹³ After 1918, as the leadership of the Anti-Saloon League passed from D. M. Gandier to Arthur C. Briggs, dry forces became increasingly allied with conservative issues and candidates. In 1920 the dries entered former Lieutenant Governor A. J. Wallace, president of the Anti-Saloon League, in the Republican Senatorial primary. The division of the dry vote between Wallace and William Kent was a major factor in handing the nomination to the single wet candidate, Samuel Shortridge. Four years later, in 1924, the Prohibition question would rob the Progressives of the fruits of the only clear victory they were to win that year.¹⁴

While Progressives impoverished their energies in their own internecine rivalries, they also confronted a more threatening external challenge. The legislature of 1921, with the support of Governor Stephens, had substantially increased the state budget and passed the King bill, raising corporation taxes thirty-five percent.¹⁵ In so doing the Progressives brought down

upon themselves the opposition of one of the most potent combinations of interest groups ever gathered in Sacramento—the so-called “Billion Dollar Lobby,” whose argument consisted of a demand for the end of extravagance, and whose grossest techniques sometimes included distribution of whiskey on the floor of the Senate.¹⁶ By the election of 1922, this opposition had mushroomed into a powerful political machine bent on purging California of Progressive administrators and legislators. It encompassed Old Guard Republican leaders long vexed by the power of the Johnson wing of the party; it was financed in part by corporations adversely affected by tax equalization and in part by elements fighting the state’s prohibition and anti-race track laws. It was buttressed by the newspaper support of the powerful Knowland-Cameron-Chandler axis (*Oakland Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times*) and utilized front organizations like the “People’s Economy League.”¹⁷ For one committed Progressive, 1922 marked the first concerted political drive by a “state-wide organization infinitely more powerful, better equipped, more intelligently directed than the once all-powerful Southern Pacific machine. . . .”¹⁸

The economy-based campaign was successful; Governor Stephens was defeated in the Republican primary by Friend W. Richardson, an apostate Progressive who had been State Treasurer during part of the Johnson administration. The Progressives lost control of the Assembly and retained only a bare majority in the Senate. Governor Richardson entered into the task of cutting expenses with obvious relish; he submitted to the legislature a proposed budget two million dollars less than that of the previous biennium, reduced the number of state employees and slashed social programs dear to Progressives. Attempts to restore depletions fell victim to the Governor’s newly acquired power of item veto in budget bills. To leave no remaining doubt as to his authenticity as an economizer, the governor vetoed nearly half the bills passed by the legislature on the grounds they were extravagant or unnecessary.¹⁹

The vendetta of 1922 and 1923 was so direct a challenge that Progressive leaders had no choice but to sublimate their differences if they were to preserve any of the accomplishments of the past decade. The Progressive Voters’ League, founded in August, 1923, was designed to underwrite and sustain the Progressive minority in Sacramento, hopefully to transform it into a majority in the 1924 elections and to unseat Richardson in 1926.²⁰ The League was the most successful of Progressive ventures in the nineteen twenties. A list of its officers reads like an honor roll of reform leaders. Prime movers were a core of Progressive legislators and elected officeholders who survived the Richardson sweep. These included Senators Herbert Jones, J. N. Inman and Lyman King, author of the tax equalization bill; Assemblyman Charles Cleary; Lieutenant Governor C. C. Young; Superintendent of Public Instruction Will C. Wood, and Clyde L. Seavey,

president of the State Railroad Commission. From outside the ranks of officialdom came Franklin Hichborn, Chester Rowell, and Seth Brown, a labor leader from Los Angeles.²¹ Funds were provided by two angels of past Progressive causes: Dr. John R. Haynes of Los Angeles and Rudolph Spreckels of San Francisco. Of the major reform leaders, only the Southern Californians who had defected after 1916—and William Kent—were absent from the roster. Kent's sympathies were clear enough: he attempted to launch a parallel organization that would add to the principles of the league a declaration in support of international cooperation and thus be free of any link to Hiram Johnson.²² The state primary in August, 1924, was the first confrontation between the Progressive Voters' League and the Richardson forces.

The attempts of the retrenched Progressives to present a united front were obstructed by an explosive and potentially disruptive factor: the presidential aspirations of Hiram Johnson. The Senator had long cherished such ambitions: in the 1920 campaign he had entered presidential primaries in twelve states and had won seven, including California.²³ Even before the death of President Harding, Johnson was making advances to national Republican leaders and asserting his claim to lead the nascent Progressivism that was stirring in California. "If the State has turned backward, as many of our friends seem to think," he wrote C. K. McClatchy in July, 1923, "we better develop that fact, and the earliest time at which we can develop it is at the presidential preference primary."²⁴ The Senator never relented in his determination to link his own candidacy with the preservation of Progressivism in California.

By December a drive for delegates was underway. The Senator planned to enter a score of presidential primaries, and had gathered a national campaign organization that included such Progressives as Harold Ickes, Illinois campaign manager; Usher Burdick²⁵, North Dakota manager; Senator Peter Norbeck, of South Dakota, and the attorney, Dudley Field Malone.

A strong "Northern California Johnson for President" committee was headed by Charles L. Neumiller of Stockton; Frank C. Havenner, formerly the Senator's private secretary, served as campaign manager. A Southern California arm was headed by Frank P. Doherty. Supporting the Johnson candidacy were many of the leaders of the Progressive Voters' League: Senators Jones and Inman, Albert Boynton, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, Lieutenant Governor Young, Superintendent Will C. Wood, Congressman Phil D. Swing, Clyde Seavey, and Seth Brown. Major newspapers in the state backing the Senator included the Scripps chain, the *San Francisco Call*, the McClatchy chain, and the *Stockton Record*.²⁶

Johnson seemed provided with ready-made issues as he embarked upon a campaign for delegates in the spring of 1924. Beginning in January, the

Walsh Committee had uncovered a trail of intrigue and corruption in the oil leases at Elk Hills and Teapot Dome; by March Attorney General Harry Daugherty had fallen under scrutiny, and the full story of the scandals that would blemish the Harding administration began to unravel. Wrapping himself in the mantle of reform, Johnson sounded the old Progressive battlecries as he castigated the “unholy alliance between big business and crooked politics” that dominated the Republican party, and he threatened to sever all ties if the party continued “its cowardice and half-approbation of bribery and corruption.”²⁷

Sadly for Hiram Johnson, he picked the wrong office at the wrong time. In Calvin Coolidge he had a sagacious political opponent who carefully avoided being sullied by the blemishes on the Harding administration and remained sufficiently ambivalent in his political principles to attract the support of such acknowledged Progressives as Raymond Robins and Senator William J. Borah.²⁸ Given the advantages of incumbency and support from conservative Republican leaders, Coolidge was unbeatable in 1924.

Johnson’s campaign lacked funds and organization. The direct primaries quickly affirmed its futility. In the first, in North Dakota, Johnson ran a narrow third behind Coolidge and Robert La Follette, a write-in candidate.²⁹ Johnson eked out his only victory in South Dakota. In Michigan, carried by Johnson in 1920, the President piled up a two to one majority. By April, Coolidge, with near unanimous control of delegations from non-primary states, was only 178 votes short of nomination. To clinch his victory, he swept the Illinois primary, carried Nebraska (a Johnson state in 1920), and captured Ohio and New Jersey.³⁰ By the May 6 California primary, the nomination of Calvin Coolidge was absolutely assured.

The Senator suffered defeat less than gracefully. Pouring out his emotions to his sons, he confessed: “It has been a terrible experience. I have been practically alone and have never utilized my vitality so harshly. I am so physically exhausted that I care little what happens. The contest has been against all of the wealth and all of the power there is in the United States outside of Peter Norbeck.” A week later, the final decision determined, he became painfully self-deprecating: “I should have foreseen what would happen. I did not. I have paid the penalty, and my dear boys, I tried to pay the price, and to one of my temperament and pride, it has been terrible, without whining. I am the author of my own ills, and the lack of judgment and vision have been my own.”³¹

His public stance was more determined. Confronted with the gleeful demands of his California opponents that he quit the race, Johnson adamantly responded in a telegram to his supporters: “The only idea I have is frankly to say to our people recent results make my nomination impossible but that there is a greater thing at stake in California than personal candidacy and that is Progressivism and Progressive achievement and this

primary is the first real battle between Chandler and his scoundrels on the one hand and the men and women on the other who want to keep California decent and progressive.”³²

Johnson’s determination was a liability to the Progressive drive for control of the legislature. Not only was the candidacy futile, it threatened to wreck the unity the leaders strived so hard to attain. The Senator was little help, for he would not return to California to campaign. While a substantial number of Progressive leaders backed Johnson, William Kent and Chester Rowell were already numbered among the Coolidge entourage. Eighteen former Progressives signed a statement attacking Johnson and pledging support to the President. Among them were former Governor George C. Pardee, A. J. Wallace, dry Senatorial candidate in 1920, and such prominent ex-leaders from Southern California as Marshall Stimson and Edward A. Dickson.³³

The Johnson campaign leaders, trapped in a situation not of their own making, went on gamely with the effort. The strongest buttress remaining in the Johnson constituency was the support of organized labor. The four labor councils of Los Angeles—central labor, building trades, metal trades and allied printing trades—unanimously endorsed Johnson. A flyer distributed by the State Federation of Labor, galvanized into political action in 1924, urged all union members who were registered Republicans to cast their ballots for Johnson.³⁴

All to no avail. Johnson delegates won only 45.7 percent of the vote, as the Senator suffered the only defeat ever inflicted upon him in California. A *Los Angeles Times* feature story gloated, “And so Hiram Johnson goes howling and foaming into political oblivion.”³⁵ Not only were political requiems twenty-one years premature, but an examination of the voting returns reveals some impressive Johnson support. He carried 36 of the state’s 58 counties. Had California been divided and the area south of the Tehachapi excluded, Johnson would have carried the state with a 54% margin.³⁶ Johnson swept San Francisco by a 60% landslide. In his traditional centers of strength, the seven working-class assembly districts south of Market Street and in the Mission District, his margin ranged from 64 to 79%.³⁷

That the leaders could regroup after the defeat of their favorite son candidate is convincing evidence that vitality and conviction remained in the California Progressive movement. All the major leaders of the Johnson campaign were active in the drive to win control of the state legislature in the August primary, and no prominent Progressive, not even Rowell, was in open opposition. A few who had opposed Johnson in May, most notably former Governor Pardee and William Kent, campaigned actively against a Richardson-controlled legislature.³⁸ Johnson himself returned to California and took to the campaign trail. State labor leaders cooperated actively with

the Progressive Voters' League. Responding to declarations of Coolidge supporters that their primary victory would pace the drive for complete control of the legislature by the Richardson economy bloc, the leaders of the Progressive Voters' League rejoined that the primary had nothing to do with state politics—an interpretation somewhat different from that of Johnson in April.³⁹ Even the La Follette presidential candidacy, upon which there was sharp division within the Progressive camp, was not allowed to interfere with the state campaign.

If the Progressives failed to win a decisive victory in August, they at least established a beachhead. Eleven of the twenty contested Senate seats were won by Progressives, giving them a one vote majority; ten new Progressive assemblymen were elected, making a total of at least forty-eight Progressives out of the eighty members of the lower house.⁴⁰ In San Francisco and Alameda counties, all candidates opposed to Governor Richardson were elected. Although the Progressive Voters' League published no official list of candidates, the *Sacramento Bee* listed five Senatorial candidates and thirteen Assembly candidates from Northern California endorsed by the League. All of the Senators and nine of the Assembly candidates were elected.⁴¹

In part it was an abortive victory. Divisions among the Progressives over Prohibition permitted their opponents to organize both the Senate and the Assembly.⁴² However, some of the more aggressive budget-cutting proclivities of Governor Richardson were curtailed and the legislative session of 1925 registered several notable progressive achievements, most significantly the ratification of the federal Child Labor amendment. More important, the momentum of the 1924 campaign carried the Progressive Voters' League to its last decisive triumph: the defeat of Richardson and the election of a Progressive, C. C. Young, to the governorship in 1926.⁴³

Simultaneous with the battle for control of the legislature, California Progressives supplied the motive power for two other vital campaigns: the presidential candidacy of Robert M. La Follette and the Water and Power Act, an initiative designed to provide state financing of a master plan for water and hydro-electric development in California. The same individuals, men usually associated with the faction of the Progressive movement to the left of the main current in California, led both these campaigns.

Heading the La Follette campaign in the western states was Rudolph Spreckels of San Francisco, a radical Progressive who had been intimately associated with reform causes since the San Francisco graft prosecutions of 1906. Northern California campaign manager was Franck Havenner, who had filled the same role in the Johnson primary. William Kent at first endorsed Coolidge, but by September had climbed aboard the La Follette bandwagon. The labor leaders who had been active in Progressive causes—Paul Scharrenberg, Andrew Furuseth, and Seth Brown of the A. F. of L.,

and Henry See of the Railroad Brotherhoods—made speaking tours for La Follette. Franklin Hichborn, Congressman Phil Swing, and Clyde Seavey, veteran Progressives all, were other backers. The McClatchy chain of newspapers, the most consistent Progressive press in the state, endorsed La Follette in August.⁴⁴

To support La Follette, whose electors were listed as Socialists on the California ballot, required a commitment to Progressivism greater than a commitment to the Republican party. The choices made by leaders who had been associated with the reform movement is a good barometer of their Progressive convictions. At the opposite extreme from Spreckels, Kent, and Havenner, some ex-Progressives joined in smearing of La Follette. Chief among them was Chester Rowell. He was one of the three authors of a public letter signed by forty-eight former supporters of Theodore Roosevelt which declared that La Follette had betrayed Progressivism in 1912, had been an enemy of his country in 1917, and mounted a candidacy now that was based on radicalism and could only lead to class warfare.⁴⁵ After a weekend on the Potomac with the President, Rowell declared his intention to take charge of the Johnson elements among the California Progressives and lead them to Coolidge.⁴⁶

More numerous than the outright supporters or opponents of La Follette were those Progressives, mostly office holders or aspirants, who maintained a studied indifference during the autumn of 1924. Pace setter for this group was Hiram Johnson. The logic of Johnson's position in the primary campaign—his condemnation of the Republican party as a handmaiden of corruption and his threats to bolt unless drastic reforms were completed—seemed to dictate an endorsement of La Follette. More contrite following his defeat, Johnson argued that he was pledged to accept the results, yet was not obligated to endorse Coolidge. His only alternative, he insisted, was to remain aloof, maintain his position in the Republican party, and in the future hope to "bore within."⁴⁷ The Senator defied all attempts of both La Follette and Coolidge partisans to smoke him out. Through the autumn months he isolated himself in his Green Street home, protected from curious onlookers by two police dogs and a Japanese butler.⁴⁸ He broke his public silence only to criticize the decision of the California Supreme Court that barred the La Follette electors from the ballot and forced Californians who wished to vote for the third party to cast their ballot for the Socialist electors.⁴⁹ Other than this, Johnson masked his intentions so successfully that even his personal papers give no hint of how he finally cast his ballot.

Some Progressive leaders, like Senators Jones and Inman and Superintendent Wood, followed Johnson's lead and simply dropped out of the political picture following the August primaries; Lieutenant Governor Young and Meyer Lissner endorsed Coolidge, then sat on their hands through the campaign. Of the leaders of the Progressive Voters' League,

only Albert E. Boynton, chairman of the Republican Central Committee, was active on Coolidge's behalf.⁵⁰

The Republican state convention in September succeeded in perpetuating the tortured compromise which had held the party together since the Progressives had returned to the fold in 1916. A harmony ticket of presidential electors drawn from both factions was selected. Johnson's campaign manager in May, Charles Neumiller, became new chairman of the central committee. Management of the Coolidge campaign was entrusted, however, to the group that had backed Hoover in 1920, Richardson in 1922, and opposed Johnson in May. The presidential campaign committee was chaired by Mark Requa, a Standpatter and leading California lieutenant of Herbert Hoover.⁵¹

The result was a two-headed campaign. A reporter who visited the offices of the Republican Central Committee wryly observed, "It would not be true to picture these headquarters as teeming with activity in behalf of Coolidge." The real center of the California Republican campaign, he found, was the office of the Coolidge-Dawes Republican League, firmly under the control of Requa and the Standpat wing of the party. He recorded one La Follette supporter as venturing that if the State Central Committee were polled, the majority would be for La Follette. Frank P. Doherty, who had managed Johnson's primary campaign in Southern California, made a parallel observation when he divided Johnson's supporters into two classes: on the one hand those like Neumiller who due to their political futures must support Coolidge, and on the other the rank and file. "These," he surmised, "who outnumber the former group four or five to one, and in fact make up the biggest part of your support, will either openly support La Follette or go quietly and vote for him."⁵³

Whatever enthusiasm was engendered by the 1924 campaign was a near monopoly of the La Follette progressives. A reporter following Vice Presidential candidate Burton K. Wheeler through Sacramento and San Joaquin counties wrote: "There is little evidence of activity on the part of the Democrats or Republicans in either of the counties covered so far. La Follette banners on buildings and automobiles outnumber the Coolidge banners two to one."⁵⁴ As for the Democrats, it would have been difficult to conclude that John W. Davis was a presidential candidate in California. "There is no sign of any campaign for Davis in this state," wrote one leading party member, and on the eve of the election the chairman of the party's executive committee concluded, "It has been a difficult campaign by reason of the general apathy. The only enthusiasm that has been exhibited as far as I have been able to observe, has been in the La Follette group. . . ."⁵⁵

Enthusiasm and a proluxity of bumper stickers do not win elections. Coolidge carried the state by a landslide, winning 57.2% of the vote, compared to 34.5% for La Follette, 8.2% for Davis. California ranked eighth

among the states in percentage of Progressive vote.⁵⁶ Despite the debilitating Socialist label, the third party had carried fifteen counties, five of these, including Sacramento county, by a clear majority. Coolidge's margin of victory was less than that for Harding four years earlier or that of Hoover in 1928.⁵⁷ If the overwhelming Republican strength of Southern California could have been excluded, Coolidge's margin would have been reduced to 51.4%.

Concurrent with the presidential election, California voters were asked to approve on initiative a Water and Power Act—on the ballot a second time, it having been defeated in 1922. The Act authorized the state to issue \$500,000,000 in bonds to finance the distribution of water and electric energy as a part of a master water plan. Preferential rights in the purchase of water and power were to be given to the state and political subdivisions, not to privately owned utilities.⁵⁸

The Water and Power Acts were opening salvos in a decades-long battle, not yet concluded, to evolve some equitable plan for the distribution of water from surplus areas in the northern portion of the state to the parched areas of the southern San Joaquin Valley. More than any other single political issue of the twenties, the Water and Power Act bridged the concerns of the Progressives with key issues in California politics in the 'thirties and 'forties. In 1919, Robert B. Marshall, chief hydrographer of the U. S. Geological Survey, had outlined a water plan hinging upon a series of storage reservoirs in the Sacramento River system and two large canals to carry water south into the San Joaquin Valley. Marshall's plan, with various modifications, became the nucleus of the Central Valley Project, finally approved by the state legislature in 1933. In 1921, a Water and Power Act based upon Marshall's plan was approved by the Senate but killed in the Assembly. Immediately a group of advocates circulated petitions to submit the defeated measure to the voters in the 1922 election.⁵⁹

The major promoter of the Water and Power Act, both as organizer and financier, was Rudolph Spreckels—a millionaire in his own right and perhaps the most radical of California Progressives. Joining him were a group of leaders customarily associated with the left wing of the California reform movement, men like William Kent, Franklin Hichborn, Clyde Seavey, John R. Haynes, and C. K. McClatchy. All of the principal backers of the Water and Power Act, with the exception of former Governor Pardee, were La Follette supporters in 1924. While it is likely that many of the Progressive legislators, such as Senators Jones and Inman, were supporters of public power, out of the major Johnson backers in the May primary only Seavey and McClatchy were closely associated with the Water and Power initiative. Johnson himself never endorsed the initiative. Spreckels and Haynes, two of the most vigorous backers of the Water and Power Act, had not been active in Johnson's primary campaign and Kent,

of course, had opposed Johnson. Albert Boynton, who was rapidly disengaging from his Progressive past, was the only major leader publicly to oppose the initiative.⁶⁰

The foremost point of contention was the provision in the Act giving preferential rights to publicly owned water and power companies. This assured the determined opposition of the powerful Pacific Gas and Electric and Southern California Edison companies, suppliers of most of the electric voltage in California. After the first initiative had been overwhelmingly rejected by the voters, a Senate investigation revealed that P. G. & E. had spent nearly half a million dollars not only for publicity but in retainers to various vocal opponents of the Act, including former San Francisco mayor and building trades leader, P. H. McCarthy. Utility money had underwritten such "grass-roots" opposition organizations as the "People's Economy League."⁶¹

Against an opposition that was well financed, ably led, and with most of the state's press at its disposal, the tiny legion of public power advocates labored in vain. There was no denying that the proposed plan was costly—an argument with considerable political saliency in the twenties.⁶² Los Angeles county had temporarily satisfied its water needs through the completion of aqueducts from Owens Valley and the voters there were little concerned with the irrigation needs of Central Valley farmers. Though the 1924 initiative had wider support than that of 1922, particularly from organized labor, the Water and Power Act was decisively defeated for a second time. The initiative won only thirty percent of the votes cast and a majority only in two northern counties. Even in defeat, the Progressive advocates of water and power development had dramatized a recurring problem, one that all the amassed political influence of private utilities and ingrained fears of government spending could not down. Lines of opposition, destined to appear again in years to come, were clearly drawn. A water plan for California had to await a new decade, a depression, and federal policies different from those of the 'twenties.

It is true that in four crucial campaigns of 1924 the Progressives could be credited with only one indecisive victory, the narrow margin of control they had won in the Senate and Assembly. There was no single Progressive movement in California in 1924 in the sense of a group espousing a common ideology and committed to a common program—perhaps there never had been.⁶³ Yet the major challenges to the economy-based conservatism that had come to dominate the politics of the state were raised by leaders who were politically rooted in the reform battles of the preceding decade. Divisions among the leaders did not prevent the formation of a series of coalitions around specific issues, ranging from the near unanimous support of Progressives in the battle for control of the legislature to the core of determined radicals who provided the momentum for the La Follette

campaign. As the following chart (classifying public declarations of support or non-support of the four issues in 1924 by nineteen Progressive leaders mentioned in this article) indicates, there was considerable overlap in the four coalitions and few were the Progressives who were active on only a single issue.

THE PROGRESSIVE COALITIONS OF 1924*

	<i>La Follette</i>	<i>Water and Power</i>	<i>Johnson Primary</i>	<i>State Campaign</i>
Seth Brown	X	X	X	
John R. Haynes	X	X		X
Katherine P. Edson	X		X	
Franklin Hichborn	X	X	X	X
William Kent	X	X	O	X
Clyde Seavey	X	X	X	X
C. K. McClatchy	X	X	X	X
Phil Swing	X		X	X
Rudolph Spreckels	X	X		X
Franck Havenner	X		X	
George Pardee	O	X	O	X
Herbert Jones		X	X	X
Albert Boynton	O	O	X	X
J. N. Inman			X	X
Charles Neumiller	O		X	X
C. C. Young	O		X	X
Hiram Johnson			X	X
Will C. Wood			X	X
Chester Rowell	O		O	X

*Legend: X = publicly supported; O = publicly opposed; blank = public stand not known

The coalitions of Progressive leaders were responsible for whatever dynamism remained in California politics in the nineteen twenties. Functioning as the major opposition in the election of 1924, they delineated alternatives and kept political dialogue from freezing into a sterile series of choices between various shadings of the status quo. For some of the leaders, those who had political sinecures or political ambitions, the battle was a holding operation—that of defending achievements of the past. To a few like Rudolph Spreckels, John R. Haynes, William Kent, or Franck Havenner, the challenge was to project their Progressive principles to confront new problems and new responsibilities.

NOTES

1. Arthur S. Link, "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920s?" *American Historical Review*, LXIV (July, 1959), 833-51; Jackson K. Putnam, "The Persistence of Progressivism in the 1920s: The Case of California," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXV (November, 1966), 395-411; Otis L. Graham, Jr., "Postwar Progressivism," *The Twenties: The Critical Issues*, ed. Joan Hoff Wilson (Boston, 1972), 14-25; John L. Shover (ed.), *Politics of the Nineteen Twenties* (Waltham, Mass., 1970).
2. George Mowry, *The California Progressives* (1st paperback ed.; Chicago, 1963), 93; Alexander Saxton, "San Francisco Labor and the Populist and Progressive Insurgencies," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXIV (November, 1965), 421-38; Michael P. Rogin and John L. Shover, *Political Change in California* (Westport, Conn., 1970), 62-89.
3. Mowry, 277-80.
4. Harry Chandler, editor of the *Los Angeles Times*.
5. Hiram Johnson to Katherine Phillips Edson, May 28, 1924, Edson papers, Special Collections Department, U.C.L.A. Library, Box 1, folder 14.
6. Mowry, 201, 284.
7. *Labor Clarion* (San Francisco), October 13, 1916.
8. Hiram Johnson to Chester Rowell, March 19, 1917, Rowell papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. References to box and file are not included when item is included in the collection's index.
9. C. C. Moore, Johnson's opponent in the 1922 Senatorial primary.
10. Hiram Johnson to C. K. McClatchy, August 4, 1924, Johnson papers, Bancroft Library.
11. Mowry, 288; Rowell to Edward H. Hamilton, June 23, 1922; Rowell papers.
12. Franklin Hichborn, "California Politics, 1891-1939" (unpublished MSS, Haynes Foundation, Los Angeles), 1717. Hereinafter cited Hichborn.
13. *Ibid.*, 1718.
14. Mowry, 284. Gilman Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933* (Berkeley, 1957), 155; Hichborn, 1723-50.
15. The state budget had increased modestly until 1917 when it jumped 90% over the preceding biennium. This initiated a process of budget incrementation that continued through the twenties. Under the provisions of the Plehn tax system adopted in 1911 general revenues from property taxes were assigned to local and county governments and all revenue for state operations was derived from taxes on utilities, bank stocks and corporate franchises. Hence revenues for the increased state budget had to come from business sources. Putnam, *loc. cit.*, 400-02.
16. Hichborn, 1826-33.
17. *Ibid.*, 1928; Ronald Chinn, "Structure and Function of the Democratic Party in California" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957), 15-17.
18. Hichborn, 2294.
19. Putnam, *loc. cit.*, 404-06.

20. *Ibid.*, 406-08; Russell M. Posner, "The Progressive Voters' League, 1923-1926," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XXXVI (September, 1957), 151-61.
21. Hichborn, 2151.
22. Posner, *loc. cit.*, 254-55.
23. Russell M. Posner, "State Politics and the Bank of America, 1920-1934" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1956), 134.
24. Hiram Johnson to C. K. McClatchy, July 30, 1923, Johnson papers.
25. Subsequently president of the North Dakota Farmers' Holiday Association and Congressman-at-large from North Dakota.
26. Hichborn, 2143; Hiram Johnson to Franck Havenner, May 10, 1924, Johnson papers.
27. *New York Times*, April 26, 1933, 3.
28. Robert James Maddox, "Keeping Cool with Coolidge," *Journal of American History*, LIII (March, 1967), 772-80.
29. *New York Times*, March 21, 1924, 2.
30. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1924, p. 1; *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 28, 1924.
31. Hiram Johnson to Hiram, Jr. and Archibald Johnson, April 6, April 15, 1924, Johnson papers.
32. Hiram Johnson to Young Man's Republican League of Los Angeles, April 20, 1924, Johnson papers.
33. *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 1924.
34. Copy in Johnson papers, Part III, Carton 10.
35. May 8, 1924.
36. He tallied 34.5% in the eight counties of Southern California: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura; 54.1% in the balance of the state.
37. Rogin and Shover, 62-89.
38. *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 25, 1924; *Sacramento Bee*, May 24, 1924.
39. *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 25, 1924.
40. Posner, *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XXXVI, 257; Hichborn, 2157-59. Republican nomination was virtually tantamount to election. The Democratic party was defunct at the state level and most Republican legislative candidates crossfiled so that the winner was the nominee of both parties. See Robert E. Hennings, "California Democratic Politics in the Period of Republican Ascendancy," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXI (August, 1962), 267-81.
41. *Sacramento Bee*, August 23, 1924; *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 26, 1924.
42. Hichborn, 2272-84.
43. Putnam, *loc. cit.*, 406-08.
44. Hichborn, 2143-87; *Sacramento Bee*, September 20, 1924.
45. *New York Times*, September 15, 1924, p. 3; Rowell to Mary E. Gibson, August 25, 1924, Rowell papers. Spreckels noted in reply that Rowell had for a short time in 1912 been president of the LaFollette League of California and had eulogized him

then as a "conservative, constructive statesman." *New York Times*, September 17, 1924. See also Chester Rowell, "Why I Shall Vote for Coolidge," *New Republic*, XL (October 29, 1924), 218-23; Alan Tavig, "A Disputed Legacy: Roosevelt Progressives and the LaFollette Campaign of 1924," *Mid-America*, XXIII (January, 1971), 44-64.

46. *New York Times*, September 14, 1924, 1.

47. Johnson to Frank P. Doherty, October 9, 1924; to C. K. McClatchy, August 21, 1924, Johnson papers.

48. *New York Times*, October 24, 1924, 3.

49. Johnson to Harold Ickes, October 8, 1924. Kenneth C. MacKay, *The Progressive Movement of 1924* (New York, 1947), 195, is in error in stating that Johnson endorsed La Follette. The misinterpretation, current in 1924, apparently arose from a typographical error in the *San Francisco Call* by which it was inferred that Johnson's criticism of the Supreme Court decision was an endorsement of La Follette.

50. *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 5, October 3, 1924; Posner, "State Politics and the Bank of America," 195.

51. *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 17, 1924.

52. *New York Times*, October 25, 1924, 10.

53. Frank P. Doherty to Hiram Johnson, October 13, 1924, Johnson papers.

54. *New York Times*, October 10, 1924, 6.

55. John B. Elliott to William Gibbs McAdoo, September 2, 1924; Rudolph V. Whiting to McAdoo, November 4, 1924, McAdoo papers, Box 306, 308, Library of Congress.

56. MacKay, 274.

57. Richard M. Scammon, ed., *America at the Polls* (Pittsburgh, 1965), 57-58.

58. The text of the initiative is in Frank C. Jordan, compiler, *Statement of Vote at the General Election held November 4, 1924* (Sacramento, 1924).

59. Robert deRoos, *The Thirsty Land* (Palo Alto, 1948), 20-21; Mary Montgomery and Marion Clawson, *History of Legislation and Policy Formation of the Central Valley Project*, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics (Berkeley, 1946), 21-25.

60. Hichborn, 2224-71.

61. *Ibid.*, 2014-32.

62. The state never financed water development. No attempt was made to market the bonds authorized by the legislature and upheld on an initiative in 1933—the federal government assumed the cost. deRoos, 34-40.

63. Peter G. Filene, "An Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement'," *American Quarterly*, XXII (Spring, 1970), 20-34.

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Black Ahab: William T. Shorey, Whaling Master

WHEN ONE THINKS of a whaling master, he usually envisions a dour and taciturn New Englander, born in some place like Provincetown, Fairhaven, or Newburyport, and sailing in the mid-nineteenth century out of Nantucket, Sag Harbor, or New Bedford. Captain William T. Shorey, however, was an ebullient and articulate Negro, a native of the British West Indies, who sailed from the Golden Gate, and who plied his fascinating trade through the first decade of the twentieth century. According to contemporary accounts he was the only black captain on the Pacific Coast¹—which makes his intriguing life story all the more unique.

Shorey was born on the island of Barbados in 1859. His father was a Scottish sugar planter and his mother, Rosa Frazier, described as “a beautiful creole lady,” a West Indian. As the oldest of a family of eight children, it was necessary for Shorey to begin working at an early age; and when still quite young he was apprenticed to a plumber.² Although slavery had been abolished on Barbados in 1834, the opportunities for a “colored man” were still limited.

Sidney Greenfield comments that the United States beckoned as the land of promise “for the many Barbadians who found little to attract them on the rigidly organized sugar island.”³ Also the sea apparently had a strong natural attraction for Shorey, as it did for many young men reared on the island, and he shipped as a cabin boy on a vessel bound for Boston. The captain of the ship, an Englishman, “took a fancy to him” and taught him the rudiments of navigation, a subject which he continued to study avidly under the direction of Captain Whiffer D. Leach of Provincetown.⁴

Herman Melville, the foremost chronicler of whaling, has stated that “islanders seem to make the best whalemens;” and Shorey was to prove this true. He shipped on a whaler for the first time in the mid 1870’s. The whaling industry in the United States had passed its apogée two decades earlier. From humble beginnings at Easthampton and Southampton on Long Island in the mid-seventeenth century, whaling burgeoned over the ensuing decades, and by the time that the United States declared its independence



Captain William T. Shorey, his wife Julia, and daughters Zenobia and Victoria pose in an Oakland studio at about the turn of the century. A third child, William, Jr., was born in 1903. As in many other whaling families, Mrs. Shorey and the children sometimes accompanied the skipper on his voyages.

it was one of the nation's most important industries. Nantucket was the leading whaling port throughout the eighteenth century, and on the eve of the revolution, the little island off the Massachusetts coast had a fleet which virtually equaled that of all the other North American ports. However, New Bedford, which took up whaling seriously in 1818, rapidly surpassed Nantucket and within a few decades dominated the American whaling scene. This meant that a small New England town was the cynosure of the whaling world, for by 1850, when Melville wrote the whaling classic *Moby Dick*, "the supremacy of American whaling had been established beyond question," and U. S. ships were taking ten thousand whales annually.⁵

The golden age of American whaling was to be relatively brief. The discovery of oil in Pennsylvania by Edwin L. Drake in 1859 marked the genesis of a vast industry whose competitive products would ultimately destroy much of whaling's *raison d'être*. The Civil War also dealt New England whaling a severe blow. The Confederate raiders *Alabama* and *Shenandoah* decimated the Northern whaling fleet, the former sinking fourteen ships, and the latter accounting for thirty-four. These depredations were to have a significant effect on William Shorey's career, for the losses were to be a factor in the shift of the bulk of the whaling industry from New England to the West Coast.

Not only war, but the ravages of nature struck the American whaling fleet at the very time when William Shorey was on the threshold of his career. In 1871 sixty-eight whaleships were lost in the Arctic ice, including twenty-two from New Bedford alone. In 1876, the year Shorey made his maiden voyage on a whaler, the Arctic again claimed a large number of ships.

In the period before the mid-nineteenth century, the whaling industry was largely monopolized by native-born Americans, "with the Yankee of the New England seaboard as the dominant type."⁶ However, by the time that Shorey became involved in whaling, only one-third of the crews were American born, a fact that probably aided him in his rapid rise through the ranks. The crews by this time were drawn from every race and more than a score of nations. This change in the ethnic and racial composition of the crews can be explained by a number of factors. During the period in the late nineteenth century when whaling was becoming a moribund trade, other facets of the national economy were booming; wages and working conditions in general were improving, while the reverse was occurring in the whaling industry.

Whaling had always been a very difficult, demanding, and dangerous occupation. Crewmen were frequently maimed or killed in pursuit of leviathan. Work on board a whaling ship was hard, unpleasant, and tedious. Living quarters were cramped and dirty. The food was tasteless and often literally rotten. Discipline was harsh. The pay was very low, and the crew

had to buy necessities at exorbitant rates. Seamen frequently returned from a cruise of several years' duration with only a few dollars to their credit, and in many cases actually in debt. Given these conditions, it is little wonder that when better paying, less hazardous, and more appealing jobs became available the crews of the whaling ships became largely composed of those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

E. Keble Chatterton states that the whaler's life "was likely to appeal only to three classes of men: those who had been compelled to leave the land to avoid gaol or starvation, those who thought they were going to see the world and gain adventures, and those who were determined to work their way up until they owned a whaling ship of their own."⁷ All three factors were to some degree operative in Shorey's case. First, as a Negro in an age in which racial prejudice and discrimination were very prevalent, the number of occupations in which he might hope to find acceptance and success was somewhat limited. Also, there had always been a rough sort of democracy on board a whaler, where a man was accepted for what he could do, rather than on the color of his skin or national origin. Second, for a boy who had grown up in the sequestered confines of the island of Barbados, the chance to travel widely and see the world must have had a strong appeal. Third, Shorey did have a real determination to work his way up, and he was highly successful in this endeavor.

Shorey shipped on his first whaling voyage in 1876 from Provincetown, Massachusetts. He sailed as a "greenhand" but returned as a boat steerer—a considerably more important member of the crew. On one of his early cruises Shorey almost lost his life while pursuing a sperm whale. "Evidently enraged," he related years later, "the whale attacked first one boat, smashing it, then a second one, and then attacked the one I was in. By good fortune we were able to fire a bomb into him, which, exploding, killed him and saved us."⁸ Undaunted by such experiences, Shorey pressed on with his whaling career, "a business," Melville comments in *Omoo*, "peculiarly fitted to attract the most reckless seamen of all nations."

His rise through the ranks was a rapid one—attesting to his intelligence, skill, and determination. By 1880 he had become an officer. He sailed from Boston on November 8 as third mate on the *Emma F. Herriman*, and was promoted to first officer by the end of the voyage. The *Herriman* was a fairly typical whaler, although somewhat larger than the average⁹ at 385 tons and 118 feet in length.¹⁰ The cruise lasted for more than three years, which was not an unusual length of time for a whaling voyage. During this cruise, the *Herriman* traversed the North and South Atlantic, put in on the west coast of Africa, rounded the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean, and sailed on to Australia and Tasmania, through the Tasman Sea into the South Pacific and across to the west coast of South America, calling at Chile, Peru, and Panama before proceeding to San Francisco. This cruise

must have been a memorable one for Shorey, not only because it was the first time he sailed as an officer, but also because it gave him his first glimpse of San Francisco, which was to be his home port for the remainder of his lengthy career.

Shorey shipped again aboard the *Herriman* in 1884 and 1885, sailing as second and then as first officer on ten-month voyages, which were typical of West Coast whaling. Then in 1886, only ten years after beginning his whaling career, he made the great step to the coveted position of command—thus becoming “the only colored captain on the Pacific Coast.”¹¹ This was a great tribute to Shorey’s ability and stature among his fellow seamen, for the whaling captain had to be a man of many and varied talents. He had to be an experienced and skilled sailor, an excellent navigator, a shrewd trader, an intelligent and forceful leader, and able to assume all kinds of responsibility. “During the course of an average voyage,” Elmo Hohman writes, the whaling master “was almost certain to act as physician, surgeon, lawyer, diplomat, financial agent, entrepreneur, taskmaster, judge [and] peace-maker. . . .”¹² Shorey possessed all the requisite qualifications and was to prove himself one of the most able practitioners of this demanding profession.

At this stage in his life Shorey may well have resembled the swarthy “Handsome Sailor,” described in the opening lines of Melville’s *Billy Budd* who “with the off-hand unaffectedness of natural regality . . . seemed to accept the spontaneous homage of his shipmates.” He was certainly an attractive man, as numerous photographs in the possession of his daughter attest; and he was known for his charming manner. With these attributes he succeeded in winning the hand of Julia Ann Shelton, the talented daughter of one of the leading Negro families of San Francisco; and they cruised to the Hawaiian Islands in the *Herriman* on their honeymoon. The captain left his young wife in Honolulu and continued his whaling voyage to the Sea of Japan and the Okhotsk Sea, returning with a valuable cargo of 150 barrels of sperm oil, 420 barrels of whale oil, and 5000 pounds of whalebone.¹³

In 1889, Shorey took command of the brig *Alexander*. At 136 tons and 87 feet the *Alexander* was small for a whaler, but recently built (1886) by J. W. Crowell of Cambridge, Maryland; she was a trim and graceful vessel. Shorey made two successful cruises with the *Alexander* in 1889 and 1890. Then disaster struck in 1891, and the *Alexander* was sunk in the Arctic ice pack off St. Paul’s Island (part of the Pribilofs) in the Bering Sea.¹⁴ Shorey’s skill and resourcefulness, however, managed to save the entire crew.

The owner of the *Alexander* certainly did not lose faith in Shorey, and upon his return to San Francisco immediately placed him in command of another vessel, the *Andrew Hicks*. The *Hicks* (see illustration) was built



The Andrew Hicks, long under Captain Shorey's command, here lies with a cluster of old time whalers at a San Francisco pier in 1904. The Hicks was built at Fairhaven, Mass., in 1867—when sailing whalers and huge oil barrels on the wharves were a common sight in New England ports.

by J. Delano at Fairhaven, Massachusetts in 1867,¹⁵ and by the time Shorey took command the ship had already endured a score of years of hard service. This had taken its toll. In 1889 her captain had written to Captain David B. Adams, a part owner of the vessel: "The old *Hicks* is about the same old sixpence only getting mighty shaky; her rigging is in terrible shape about ready to fall off her. I shouldn't be surprised to see the main-mast go over the side any day. She has the same old leaks only worse than last year, twenty minutes a day steady; it's forward somewhere; you can hear it running in but can't tell where."¹⁶ In spite of this dismal description, and perhaps as a result of his skillful seamanship, the *Hicks* completed eight successful voyages under Shorey's command in the decade between 1892 and 1902.

Although certainly no monomaniac, and unlike Ahab in certain other

respects, Shorey pursued the whale with much of the same relentless determination. In 1894, for example, he undertook two voyages within the same year in command of different ships. He sailed on February 2, 1894 aboard the *Hicks* on a cruise to the North Pacific, which brought him back through the Golden Gate on November 6. Then after only spending less than a month ashore, he headed out on the *Gay Head*, one of the most famous of the San Francisco whalers. This voyage to the North Pacific in 1894-1895 proved to be one of the most successful of his career.¹⁷

He returned, however, to the command of the *Hicks* in 1896 for six more voyages. An examination of the crew lists and shipping papers of the last three of these voyages reveals some interesting information. Writing at mid-century, Melville stated that "at the present day not one in two of the many thousand men before the mast in the American fishery are American born. . . ." Half a century later there were even fewer native-born Americans engaged in whaling, as is evidenced by Shorey's crews. Like Melville's *Pequod*, the *Hicks* had crew members from France, Portugal, Denmark, England, Ireland, China, the South Seas, and islands all over the globe.¹⁸ However, in addition Shorey's crews included men from Austria, Germany, Poland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Canada, Australia, and British Guiana.¹⁹ They were not only drawn from many nations, but many races as well. This is quite evident from the crew lists, but it appears even more vividly in a contemporary account, which describes the crew of the *Hicks* as "the most heterogeneous that has made port in many a day. Bright, active Americans are in the fore-castle with rugged Northmen, yellow-skinned Chinese, brown Esquimaux and kinky-haired sailors as black as ever walked the plank of a river packet."²⁰ The idea of a ship's crew as a microcosm of a world society has frequently been used as a literary device, as Melville used it in *Moby Dick*; but in the case of Shorey's ships it was literally true. Like the world, the ship had its share of friction. Although the newspaper account of the 1901 voyage of the *Hicks* states that "all hands were friendly throughout the long and tedious cruise," this was not the case; and one seaman was stabbed and seriously wounded by another sailor.²¹

At the time that Melville first sailed aboard the *Acushnet* in 1841 as a youngster of twenty-two, the majority of whaling crew members were young men like himself. Hohman states that during this period there were many ships "with crews whose average ages were little in excess of twenty years," and that it "was exceptional to find a man of thirty in a fore-castle. . . ."²² Shorey's crews, however, were considerably older—with many men in their thirties and an average age of about 29.

After the 1902 voyage aboard the *Hicks*, Shorey took command of another vessel. The *Hicks*, however, in spite of her bedraggled condition, remained in service for another fifteen years before foundering off Cape

Henry, Virginia, while in the merchant service, to which she had been transferred the year before. As Lloyd Hare comments, "one likes to think that her stout oaken heart broke because she no longer chased the whale. It is equally possible that her merchant crew was not versed in the science of coddling a decrepit whaler."²³

Shorey's new and final command was the whaling bark *John and Winthrop*, built at Bath, Maine, in 1876 by Goss, Sawyer, and Packard.²⁴ Shorey made five voyages in the *John and Winthrop* between 1903 and 1908.

His most exciting voyage occurred in 1907. While returning from the Okhotsk Sea, the ship experienced two fierce typhoons. Although all sails had been taken in and the ship was under bare spars, second mate Joseph Manuel reported that the vessel "was driven along at a speed of fifteen knots. The ship was battened down and all hands, as far as possible, remained below. The wind and sea increased in fury, smashed the davits and carried away one of the boats, besides sweeping everything off the deck. For thirty long hours the tempest lasted, during which no one ate or slept. The man at the wheel, when the storm was at its height, was blown against the bulwarks and severely bruised and shaken." The second typhoon carried away two more boats and all the sails, and large waves swept over the decks. Were this not enough, when near the Bowsail Channel the *John and Winthrop* encountered a thick fog and when it lifted the ship was only twenty feet off a reef. The crew testified that "nothing but Captain Shorey's coolness and clever seamanship saved a wreck."²⁵

Shorey sailed on his final voyage in January of 1908. En route to the Pacific whaling grounds he put in at Honolulu, where he was very enthusiastically received. Melville comments in *Redburn* that "whalemen are far more familiar with the wonders of the deep than any other class of seamen." Certainly this was true of Captain Shorey, and he was renowned and sought after as a raconteur. A newspaper reporter who did an article on Shorey at this time stated: "He has many reminiscences to recount, and the waterfront has been reveling in whaling adventures as it might if it had suddenly taken to reading *The Cruise of the Cachelot* and other of Frank Bullen's whaling stories."²⁶ Unfortunately for posterity, Shorey was content to display his whaling knowledge and eloquence orally, otherwise we might be reading today whaling chronicles by a black counterpart of Melville.

Actually Captain Shorey might have done well to turn to literature at this juncture, for whaling had become a moribund trade. Shorey recounted that "in the old days there were as many as three hundred whalers"²⁷ in the harbor at Honolulu, but by 1908 the arrival of the *John and Winthrop* was cause for special attention. The whaling bark had become an anachronism, and whaling a dying industry in the United States. Pressed by stiff competition from other products, the price of whalebone and oil steadily declined until it was no longer profitable to outfit a whaler.

Shorey retired in 1908 and spent the remaining decade of his life ashore in Oakland, California. He continued to keep his Master's license active²⁸ until the year he died, perhaps still hoping to put to sea once again and to die in harness like Ahab while still in full pursuit of leviathan.

The author wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of the following institutions and individuals: The Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif., particularly Dr. Edwin H. Carpenter; The Bancroft Library of the University of California, particularly Mr. John B. Tompkins; The Stanford University Library; The California Historical Society; The San Francisco Public Library; The Federal Records Center, San Francisco, particularly Mr. Arthur Abel; The Oakland Museum, particularly Mr. Thomas Frye; The San Francisco Maritime Museum, particularly Mrs. Matilda Dring and Mr. Albert Harmon; Mr. James Abajian, former Librarian of the California Historical Society; and especially Captain Shorey's daughter, Mrs. Victoria G. Francis of Berkeley, Calif.

NOTES

1. *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 26, 1907.
2. Obituary, *San Francisco Newspaper Union* (April, 1919), corroborated by interview with Captain Shorey's daughter, Mrs. Victoria G. Francis of Berkeley, Calif. His birthplace is incorrectly listed in other sources as Provincetown, Mass. (*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Feb. 25, 1908) and India (obituary, unknown paper—possibly *San Francisco Elevator*, in the possession of Mrs. Francis). Both obituaries give his age at death as sixty years. See also Delilah Leontium Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California* (Los Angeles, 1919), 125.
3. Sidney M. Greenfield, *English Rustics in Black Skins* (New Haven, 1966), 59.
4. Between 1863 and 1874 Captain Leach commanded a number of whalers out of Provincetown, including the "*Emporium*," "*Montezuma*," "*Mary D. Leach*," "*Sassacus*," and "*Charles Thompson*"—Federal Writer's Project, *Directory of Whaling Masters* (New Bedford, 1938), 181.
5. Foster Rhea Dulles, *Lowered Boats: A Chronicle of American Whaling* (New York, 1933); Elmo Paul Hohman, *The American Whaleman: A Study of Life and Labor in the Whaling Industry* (New York, 1928). Dulles claims Easthampton as the original whaling port; Hohman contends it was Southampton.
6. Hohman, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
7. E. Keble Chatterton, *Whalers and Whaling* (Philadelphia, 1926), 107.
8. *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, *op. cit.*
9. Reginald B. Hegarty warns of speaking in too general terms about whalers, saying that "no two were exactly alike in size, shape, or sailing qualities. Each vessel had different characteristics that were easily recognizable at great distances by those familiar with the various whalers"—*Birth of a Whaleship* (New Bedford, 1964), 19. Hegarty, who made a detailed study over many years of whaleships' specifications, states that average whaleship measured about 300 tons and 100-108 ft. in length.
10. *Record of American and Foreign Shipping* (New York, 1886), p. 358.

11. *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 26, 1907.
12. Hohman, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
13. Reginald B. Hegarty, *Returns of Whaling Vessels Sailing from American Ports* (New Bedford, 1959), 20.
14. *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping* (London, 1891); Reginald B. Hegarty, *Returns of Whaling Vessels*, 27.
15. *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping* (1898-99), Vol. II (London, 1899)—several logs of the "Andrew Hicks" are in the Melville Whaling Room in the Free Public Library at New Bedford, Mass.
16. Cited by Lloyd C. M. Hare, *Salted Tories: The Story of the Whaling Fleets of San Francisco* (Mystic, Conn., 1960), 102.
17. He brought back a cargo of 500 barrels of oil and 9000 pounds of whalebone. Reginald B. Hegarty, *Returns of Whaling Vessels*, 31.
18. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, Modern Library Edition (N.Y., 1950), 118; for the composition of the *Pequod's* crew, see especially 169ff.
19. Crew lists of the *Andrew Hicks*, voyages of 1900, 1901, and 1902. Federal Records Center, San Francisco.
20. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 31, 1901.
21. Affidavit, signed by John C. Baird, Dept. of Justice, Office of U. S. Attorney, District of Hawaii, March, 1901; Federal Records Center, San Francisco.
22. Hohman, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
23. Lloyd C. M. Hare, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
24. *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping* (1903-04), Vol. II (London, 1904).
25. *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 26, 1907.
26. *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1908.
27. *Ibid.*
28. His last Master's license, dated November 21, 1918, is on loan from Captain Shorey's daughter, Mrs. Victoria Francis, to the Oakland Museum.

Francis J. Weber

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A California Miniography

MINIATURE BOOKS, representing as they do an ultimate accomplishment in printing, illustrating, and binding, exemplify the craftsman's technical and manual dexterity for cutting, casting, and setting midgetized letters. In many cases, the initial purpose served by miniature books, some as old as movable type, has given way to the more mundane pursuit of satisfying mini-bibliophiliacs, those "Lilliputians with whale-sized appetites for literary plankton." It occasionally happens, however, that these "typographical curiosities" possess an intrinsic value apart and beyond their mere artistic qualities. This bibliographical treatise, interesting as it may be to microphiles, is aimed primarily at "exposing" a number of minuscule Californiana titles which have, for one reason or another, rather effectively eluded the notice of reviewers, librarians, collectors, and other Western Americana enthusiasts.

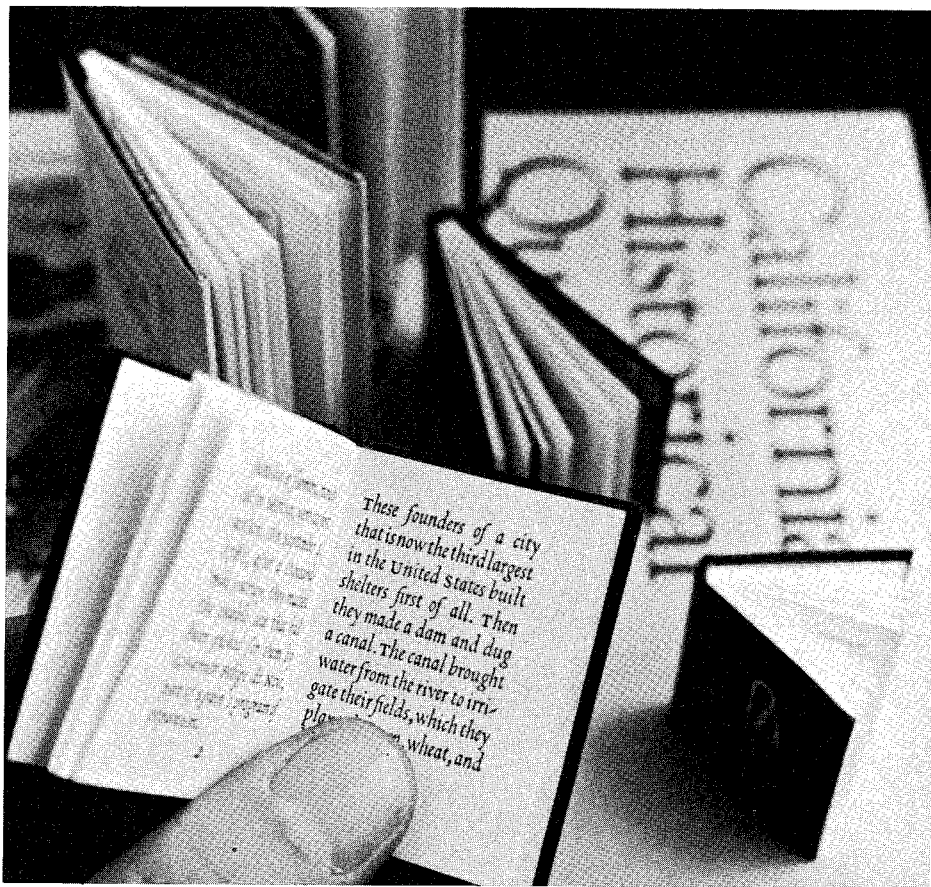
CAROL BRADLEY. *Franciscanalia*. San Francisco: The Bird in Hand Press. 1966. No pagin. $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$. A group of six poems about San Francisco, printed in a press run of 225 copies. Designed, printed, and bound by Bruce Bradley, with illuminated initials by Winifred Denyer.

A. A. BYNON. *1877—Business Directory of Oakland, Alameda and Berkeley: To Which is Added Bynon's History of California*. Oakland: Bynon & Sherman. 1877. 92 & 128 p. $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2$. The Arcade Printing House prepared several variations of the proto-miniature book printed in California, the historical part of which was envisioned as the first in a series on Western states.

A. A. BYNON. *The Constitutional Convention of 1878. State of California*. San Francisco: James T. White & Co. 1878. 148 p. $3\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$. An historical treatise following closely the format of the author's earlier work on the area's growth and evolution.

HELEN DAWSON (comp.). *Susan & Parker Smith*. Pasadena. 1970. No pagin. $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$. To the twenty-one copies of this collection of wrapping papers from showers and wedding gifts given to Mary Susan Dawson and Parker Ewing Smith, on the occasion of their wedding, bound in leather by Bela Blau, are added title pages by William M. Cheney and a tipped color picture of the newlyweds.

- CHARLES N. EARL. *An Open Letter*. Los Angeles: Peggy Christian. 1971. 12 p. $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$. Two hundred copies of this letter, written on November 29, 1887, to the Republican City Central Committee as a complaint about endorsement and registration fees, were printed by William M. Cheney at the press in the Gatehouse.
- HERBERT FAHEY. *Early Printing in California*. San Francisco: Club of Printing House Craftsmen. 1949. 63 p. $3\frac{3}{4} \times 4$. Bound in red cloth with a frontispiece facsimile of José Figueroa's *Manifesto*, this book sketches certain printing activities between 1833 and 1850, emphasizing Agustín Zamorano, the *Californian*, and the *California Star*.
- LEE FARMER *et al.* *The Story of Printing in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: The Los Angeles Club of Printing House Craftsmen. 1949. 54 p. $3\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$. A delineation of local printing highspots. Attractively bound by Frank Hasencamp.
- JOHN FRIEND. *Captain Jack*. Long Beach: The Seashore Press. 1963. 32 p. $1\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$. Reminiscences of a sea-going bookseller, principally concerned with the trade in California's southland. Bound in full brown morocco.
- DUDLEY GORDON. *The Birch Bark Poems of Charles F. Lummis*. Los Angeles: Karen and Susan Dawson. 1969. 27 p. $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$. To this description of the initial publication of the great Western American author, editor, historian, and librarian, are added two original birch bark leaves.
- FRANCIS F. GUEST, O.F.M. *The Symbolism of Santa Barbara Presidio*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archives-Library. 1968. 40 p. $2 \times 1\frac{5}{8}$. This interestingly-written treatise, printed by Grant Dahlstrom with a red and black frontispiece and bound by Bela Blau in hand-tooled green crushed morocco with raised bands and simulated hinges, portrays the final link in the mighty chain of conquest forged by Iberian soldiers to symbolize the culture and civilization associated with Spain's expansionary activities in the New World.
- CHARLES ELMER JENNEY. *California Nights' Entertainment*. Edinburgh: Valentine & Anderson, LTD., n.d. xii + 107 p. $3\frac{3}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$. Sixty previously published poems generously-illustrated, and bound in attractive plaid silk.
- JOHN MUIR. *Climb the Mountains*. Pasadena: Karen and Susan Dawson. 1965. No pagin. $1\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$. In this essay, printed by Glen Dawson and bound by Bela Blau in brown morocco, the famous Scotch naturalist, explorer, author, and conservationist describes how "willingly Nature poses herself upon photographer's plates." To the initial eighty copies, each with the 5¢ John Muir Commemorative stamp, was added, in 1966, a second edition, reset and printed by William M. Cheney.
- DOUGLAS C. McMURTIE. *Pioneer Printers of the Far West*. San Francisco: San Francisco Club of Printing House Craftsmen. 1940. 57 p. $3\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$. This treatise, published originally in 1933 at the Red Tower Press, is one of a series printed as souvenirs for the 21st annual convention of the International Association of Printing House Craftsmen.
- THOMAS ATWILL NEAL. *6th and Figueroa*. Goleta: Karen Dawson. 1965. 29 p. $2\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$. A comic-art collection of scenes and characters along the one-time "Grasshopper Street," by a popular Southland bookseller, author, artist, and columnist. Printed by William M. Cheney, engraved by Dan Taylor, and bound by Bela Blau with decorated boards in dust wrappers.



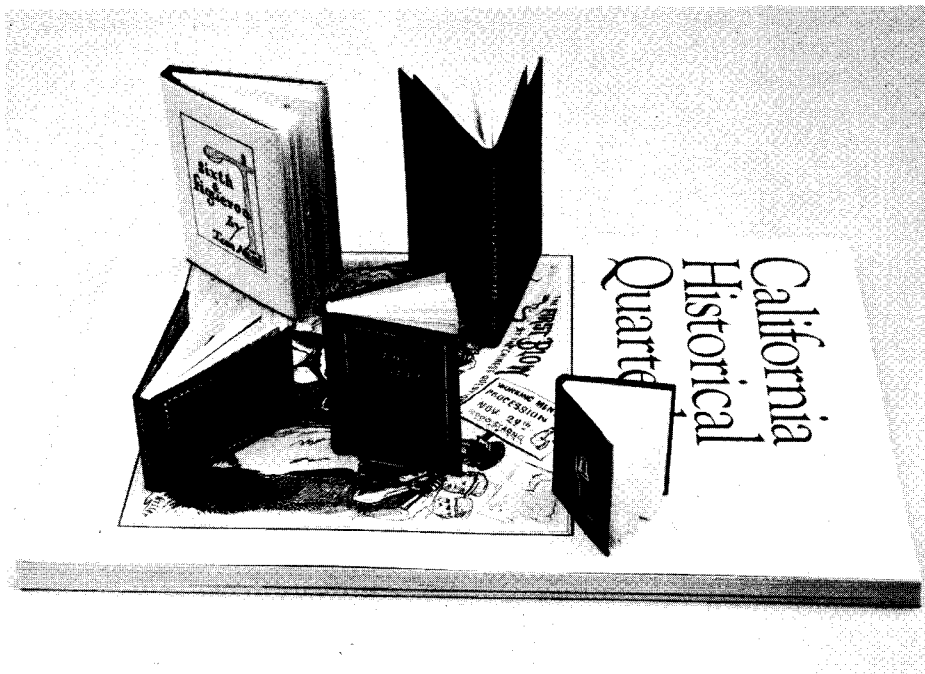
Little History of a Big City—Los Angeles, the smallest book ever printed at the Plantin Press, measures $2 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, not quite the length of a man's thumb.

WALLACE NETHERY. *The Pioneer & Charles Lamb*. Los Angeles. 1970. 11 p. $2\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$. This description of the successful attempt to inaugurate a California journal devoted primarily to literature and the arts was reprinted from the reduced plates of the earlier 1959 edition in a press run limited to twenty-five copies.

[Lawrence Clark Powell]. *L.C.P.'s Book About Book Shops*. Los Angeles: Dawson and Boswell. 1966. 14 p. $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$. A tribute to a vital and oft-overlooked phase of the Southland's culture, printed by William M. Cheney and bound by Bela Blau in full brown calf. Issued initially in November, 1965, as *Bookshops*, an eight page keepsake for the California Antiquarian Book Fair.

[Lawrence Clark Powell]. *The Sea As Seen by El Sea Powell*. Malibu: Dawson's Book Shop. 1962. 8 p. $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$. About two hundred copies of this descriptive Malibu ocean view were printed by William M. Cheney and bound by Bela Blau.

LAWRENCE CLARK POWELL. *To D.C.: Subject: The L. C. From: L.C.P.* Los Angeles. 1968. 18 p. $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$. Only twenty-five copies of this letter about the Library Council at the Los Angeles branch of the University of California were printed by William M. Cheney at The Gatehouse Press.



Miniature books—examples of the ultimate printing accomplishments—include many California titles.

WILLIAM WILCOX ROBINSON. *Little History of a Big City—Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop. 1963. 23 p. 2 x 1½. A description of scenes from the mission era to modern day freeways, handset in ten-point Narrow Bembo by Saul and Lillian Marks. Handsomely illustrated by Irene Robinson, the smallest book ever printed at the Plantin Press was issued in a limited edition of 500 copies, of which one hundred were bound in green boards by Bela Blau.

FRANK J. THOMAS. *Mission Cattle Brands*. Los Angeles. 1967. 60 p. 2⅞ x 2¼. One hundred copies of this illustrated account, with its twenty-four designs cut in linoleum and printed in various colors on textured kozo paper at the Tenfingers Press were bound in vellum over boards.

FRANK J. THOMAS. *The Myths of California Isle*. Los Angeles. 1966. 48 p. 2¾ x 2⅞. A demythologization of a long-held theory about Peninsular California, accompanied by various notes, chronologies, translations, and a bibliography. Published in a limited edition of 200 copies from handset type on dampened Rives paper at the Tenfingers Press and bound in beige linen and boards.

BERNHARDT WALL. *The California Missions*. Sierra Madre. 1947. No pagin. 1¾ x 1½. This pictorial portrayal, in twenty-four plates, was printed and bound by the author in an unlimited, but not specified edition.

BERNHARDT WALL. *Wallinana*. Sierra Madre. 1946. No pagin. 1¾ x 1¼. An artistic compilation of twelve leaves, advertising the compiler's publications, this handsome work contains an etching of his studio in Sierra Madre.

- FRANCIS J. WEBER (ed.) *Christmas in Pastoral California*. Los Angeles: Bela Blau. 1971. 25 p. $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$. This account of the Pastorela, truncated from a description appearing in the Santa Barbara Daily Press, December 29, 1885, was handset, printed and bound by Bela Blau in both red and green leather.
- FRANCIS J. WEBER. *An Earthquake Memoir*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop. 1971. 20 p. $2\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{8}$. An eye-witness report of the extensive damage inflicted on the San Fernando Valley by the temblor of February 9, 1971, printed and bound by Cathay Press Limited of Hong Kong, in a press run of 400 copies.
- FRANCIS J. WEBER. *Hollywood's "Padre of the Films."* Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop. 1972. 19 p. $2\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$. This biographical sketch, devoted to the Right Reverend John J. Devlin's work with the Motion Picture Industry, was printed by Cathay Press Limited of Hong Kong in a press run of 600 copies to commemorate the monsignor's golden sacerdotal jubilee.
- FRANCIS J. WEBER. *Up 65 Years to Larchmont*. Los Angeles: Bela Blau. 1970. 30 p. $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$. Three hundred copies of this historical sketch about Dawson's Bookshop, the "oldest antiquarian establishment" in Los Angeles, were handset, printed and bound in gilt-tooled, full leather by Bela Blau on the occasion of Susan Dawson's marriage to Parker E. Smith.
- FRANCIS J. WEBER. *What Happened to Junípero Serra?* Los Angeles: Bela Blau. 1969. 29 p. $1\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$. Printed from handset type and bound in gilt-tooled, dark green morocco by Bela Blau. Tipped into each copy of this smallest book ever devoted to a philatelic theme, is a mint edition of the colorful eighty centavo airmail stamp issued by the Republic of Mexico to commemorate the 200th anniversary of California's colonization.
- EMILY AND NORMAN WHYTOCK. *Franciscan Missions of California*. Glendale. 1969. 51 p. $1\frac{7}{8} \times 2$. Two hundred copies of this historical treatise, scheduled to coincide with California's bi-centennial, were printed by William M. Cheney and bound in beige linen cloth.
- SEBASTIÁN VIZCAÍNO. *Jornada Principal de las Californias (Accidentes Documentados)* Mexico City: G. M. Echaniz. 1963. 80 p. $1\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$. Three hundred copies of this documentary collection from the Archivo General de la Nación were printed for Dawson's Bookshop from handset type, by Arturo Morales Monterrubio, and bound in full, gilt-tooled red morocco with blue labels by Juan Silva

Book Reviews

The Founding of the Russian Empire in Asia and America. By John A. Harrison. (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971. 156 pp. \$7.95.)

Reviewed by ANTHONY D'AGOSTINO, *Assistant Professor of History, San Francisco State College.*

BOTH RUSSIA and the United States have been described as countries whose histories have been that of migrating peoples. That very interesting notion has even inspired an attempt at a Russian application of Turner's frontier hypothesis, Donald Treadgold's *The Great Siberian Migration* of 1957. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Russia and Colonial America only partially participated in West European civilization. In the ensuing century and a half they both made strides toward the closing of that gap. But during the same period Europeans drove also across America and Siberia to meet on the Pacific coast of North America. By the year of the outbreak of the French Revolution, Spanish and Russian interests divided roughly at Nootka Sound.

John A. Harrison tells the story of the Russian side of this expansion in this short and readable essay. In it he tries to do quite a lot in extremely short compass—to describe the entire process of the “gathering of the Russian lands” from early Kievan times down to the sale of Alaska. Harrison is primarily interested in the intersection of Russian, Chinese, and Japanese interests and their great struggle to control Northeastern Asia. Here he carries on in the line of his teachers at U. C. Berkeley, Robert J. Kerner and George Lantzeff, who strove to open this area up as a new field of historical study. Harrison has not contributed anything new here but has tried instead to survey the whole story and to refer the reader to the available literature in a bibliography of 174 items.

He sticks fairly close to the description of Russia's Siberian expansion given by Lantzeff and Raymond Fisher of UCLA. He does allow himself a Turnerite view of the subject which goes somewhat beyond Treadgold's, as in the following:

The actual process of exploration, conquest, and settlement bears a remarkable resemblance to the American exploration, conquest, and settlement of the trans-Mississippi West. Substitute Americans for Russians, the mountain men for promyshlenniks, the Northwest Company for Khabarov's Company, Bent's Fort or Fort Laramie for Tomsk or Ufa, the Blackfeet, Sioux, and Comanche for the Kirghiz, Bashkirs, and Kalmucks.

Harrison thinks both migrations were spurred by common passions, “the sense of freedom, the big sky, the handful of facing the mountains, the rivers, the plains, . . .” He must also note that the enterprise was always kept on short rations by the Russian government even though it collected property and poll taxes, competed with merchants in whiskey, salt, tobacco, and gold and took in as much as a quarter of the state budget in revenues from the fur trade. It was trade and not territory that the Russian government sought on the Asiatic frontier.

The peoples with which the Russian forces came into contact are of interest to Harrison. He details the methods by which they were turned against each other by

clever "diplomacy." Catherine the Great, he feels, treated these natives much better than the other Russian monarchs because of her "infatuation with Rousseau's concepts of the simplicity and grandeur of the savage nature." That did not stop her, however, from ruthlessly repressing Pugachev's rebellion which mobilized most of the Asian tribes against St. Petersburg.

The trading companies did not face such a strain on their capacities for statecraft in Northern America. There the problem was the maintenance of a supply of food in areas where there was no agriculture. The first steps of Russian explorers into North America came in 1730 as part of the attempt to trace the coast of the "Icy Sea" and eventually find a water route from Archangel to Kamchatka. In 1741 the second voyage of Vitus Bering reached Sitka and after that time Russians penetrated further down the Pacific coast of North America. Harrison refers to the vacillating policy of Catherine the Great on the question of the granting of monopoly in the fur trade to the Shelekhov company and the troublesome problem of determining how far England could be pushed. However far the English could be defied, they could not be undersold, so that the Russian traders had a difficult time maintaining their hold on Sitka Bay. Even more pressing was the food situation, which drove Russian ships to Bodega Bay in 1808 to attempt to establish a food base. From there they traded as far south as San Pedro. But Fort Ross and Bodega Bay never succeeded as a food base and the pressure of the Westward movement was imagined to be such that the Russian outposts would not be able to resist it. This meant that Russia must turn back from North America and concentrate on consolidating her power in the Amur Valley, from which point she now gazes warily at the People's Republic of China.

A Catalogue of the Everett D. Graff Collection of Western Americana. Compiled by Colton Storm. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press for the Newberry Library, 1968. xxv & 854 pp. Index. \$37.50.)

Reviewed by THOMAS F. ANDREWS, *Assistant Professor of History, Pasadena College.*

COLTON STORM, the former curator of the Graff Collection of Western Americana, has been careful to point out that this massive, yet attractive and well-planned volume, is *not* a bibliography. It is instead a guide to about one half of the nearly 10,000 books, pamphlets, maps, broadsides and manuscripts—a remarkable collection of rare source materials—that currently enhance the already impressive holdings of the Newberry Library in Chicago. And it is significant for that very reason. Everett Graff, the donor of the collection, belonged to that notable group of rare book collectors, men like Henry R. Wagner and Thomas W. Streeter, for example, whose lives and fortunes became intertwined with the famous book sellers of the past (Wright Howes, Peter Decker, and the Eberstadt brothers), and the fabulous research libraries of the present (the Newberry, the Beinecke, and the Huntington). Even death could not still the competition and cooperation of earlier days, for the publication of the Graff Catalogue coincides nicely with the appearance of the Streeter catalogues and both add measurably to the wealth of information in the older Wagner-Camp bibliography.

What makes the Graff Catalogue so essential to collectors, bibliographers, librarians, and book sellers is common knowledge to all—the detailed descriptions and collations, the pertinent annotations, and the frequent cross references to other

bibliographical works—and needs no further elaboration here. What makes the Graff Catalogue so valuable to historians of the American West, however, may not be as readily apparent. The collection obviously will prove valuable to different scholars for different reasons, depending upon what line of research they pursue. I should like to suggest one area in which the collection excels: guidebook literature of the nineteenth century. Beginning with a number of early emigrant guides, including Samuel Brown, *The Western Gazetteer* (1817), Samuel Cumings, *The Western Navigator* (1822), and John Peck, *A Guide for Emigrants* (1831), the catalogue's list of well over 150 guides continues through the familiar names connected with overland travel to Oregon and California in the forties and fifties—Hastings, Johnson and Winter, Palmer, Clayton, Ware, Child, Horn, Platt and Slater, Steele, Street, and Wadsworth—and concludes with a number of gold rush guides to the Klondike, published in the late 1890's. What makes the Graff Catalogue such an essential complement to the Wagner-Camp volume is that nearly two-thirds of the guides mentioned are either post-1865 or concerned with western regions other than the Plains and the Rockies.

Nineteenth-century guidebooks in the words of one historian were the "books that won the West." They deserve to be studied as a vital factor in shaping and directing the course of frontier settlement from the initial push through Cumberland Gap to the final surge through South Pass and over the Sierra Nevada. As promotional works, they also perpetuated a number of myths about the American West, some of which have persisted into the twentieth century. For all these reasons and more, the guidebook literature of the nineteenth century merits serious study—though it continues to be a neglected field. Happily, such a study may now begin among the rare source materials of the Graff Collection. The western historian, on his way to the archival holdings in the East, can no longer afford to by-pass the Newberry Library in Chicago. Besides, research in the Newberry is a most rewarding experience.

Lawrence Towner, as Director of the Library, Colton Storm, as curator of the collection, and all those who labored on the Graff Catalogue merit high praise and grateful thanks from the western scholarly community for this unique effort.

Troopers West, Military and Indian Affairs on the American Frontier.
 Edited by Ray Brandes. (San Diego: Frontier Heritage Press, 1970.
 206 pp. illus. \$25.00.)

Reviewed by RUDOLPH M. LAPP, *Professor of History at the College of San Mateo, and an expert in the field of black history.*

THIS ATTRACTIVE VOLUME of limited edition is an anthology of eleven selections by writers whose shared interest is the subject of the Indians of the Southwest and the various ways in which they were affected by the Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic advance in the New World.

In this reviewer's judgement four of the selections deal with the Indians as the central subject while the rest of them are concerned with white men whose activities bear on the Southwestern Indians in one way or another. Perhaps the first article dealing with the art work of Ettore De Grazia most aesthetically illustrates this latter group. Though De Grazia was neither a trooper nor an Indian, the vignette of his life and the eight superb color reproductions of his paintings of Southwestern Indians

provide a brilliant opening for the book. In a sense this is a De Grazia book for his black and white illustrations are interspersed throughout the rest of the volume.

Professor Brandes, the editor, contributes the first selection that deals centrally with a prominent Indian personality. He gives us a foretaste of the projected biography of Mangas Colorados in an interesting discussion of this legendary Apache leader. This article is followed by an interesting selection on an experiment in the recruitment of the Brule Indians into a cavalry outfit called "Troop L." Insights into race relations appear here, through the experiment itself (which was generally a success) and also through the author's good use of a white soldier's diary about the Brule Indians—which shows how one racist white man changed his attitudes.

The selection on the Jicarilla Apaches was perhaps too ambitious to attempt in eleven pages. However, it was a worthwhile effort at showing the corrosive consequences of Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon encroachments on these people. The work of Mrs. Eve Ball comes the closest to being the actual voice of the Indian. Her interview with the Apache Ace, Daklugie, is full of interest and validity and gives the reader some insights into the ethics and morality of the American Indian. His remark to Mrs. Ball that, "You love gold so much you picture your Happy Place as paved with it," was most telling.

For the Indian war buffs who are not necessarily interested in the Native American there are several interesting items. Richard Dillon and Dan Thrapp present some detective work on two military events. Dillon presents an aspect of the Modoc War and Thrapp tentatively revises the location of the Battle of Turret Peak in Arizona to Skeleton Ridge some eight miles away.

The Western photography aficionado will be delighted with Robert A. Weinstein's selection on William S. Soule, the great photographer of Southwestern Indians. William Reed provides the reader with a brief but excellent biography of General William Babcock Hazen. This story of a gruff but honest man and his difficulties with the military "establishment" of his day tells us that the problem of non-political military men breaking through with the truth is not limited to the twentieth century.

The book closes with a very useful bibliography on Indian and military conflicts in the Trans-Mississippi west. The reader whose appetite will be stimulated to further reading in this area will also discover in the introduction that many of the contributors have completed or are about to complete a more thorough work in the specific subject on which they wrote for this book.



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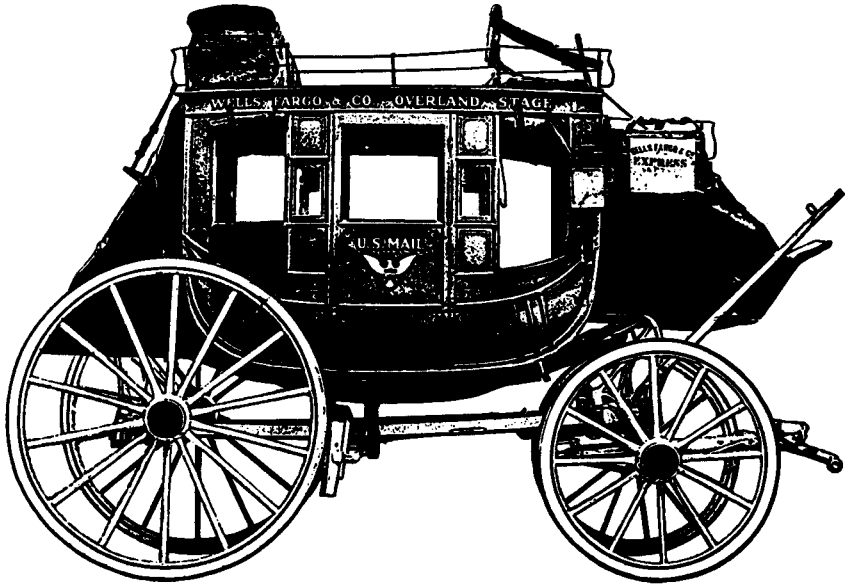
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